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**WILLISTON**  
ON THE  
**SABBATH**

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Williston, Seth, 1770-1851.  
Five discourses on the  
Sabbath









FIVE

# DISCOURSES ON THE SABBATH,

PREACHED AT DURHAM, N. Y.

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✓ BY

SETH WILLISTON, D. D.

LATE PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THAT PLACE.

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“Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.”—NEHEMIAH.

NEW HAVEN, CONN.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM G. HOOKER.

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1847.

✍ The first edition of this work, published by Messrs. E. & E. Hosford, of Albany, in the year 1813, is now out of print; and probably not a copy can be found except in public or private libraries.

The subscriber having obtained leave of the *Author* to publish a new edition, and having employed him to revise the work, has caused it to be stereotyped, with a view of furnishing it to such persons as wish to take the same in quantities, not less than *one hundred copies*, at cost—that it may be circulated gratuitously, by those who are able and willing to do it, or at a small profit by those who purchase for sale.

To promote the better observance of the Lord's Day, rather than pecuniary advantage, is the object of the republication of this very valuable work.

W. G. HOOKER.

*New Haven, Conn. }  
September 1, 1847. }*



## P R E F A C E.

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THESE Discourses were first published in 1813. They originated in a request, made to the author by persons who were then forming associations for the purpose of suppressing certain prevalent immoralities, to furnish them with a tract which would be calculated to aid them in making a stand against the profanation of the sabbath; which was one of those immoralities the suppression of which they felt themselves under obligation to attempt. Having no tract in his possession adapted to this exigence, nor knowing where such a one could be found, he concluded to attempt to prepare one himself. By conversing with some of those friends of the sabbath, who were desirous of promoting its better observance, he learned that one great obstacle to their success arose from the different sentiments which were entertained, even among believers in the inspiration of the scriptures, on the subject of sabbath sanctification and profanation, and concerning those things which *ought*, and those which *ought not* to be done on this holy day. He was also apprized of the fact that among professed Christians there were some who held the sentiment, that the New Testament dispensation had released us from all *moral obligation* to keep holy the sabbath day; leaving us at liberty to observe it or not, as we should see fit.

These considerations determined the author of this work, in case he should write a tract on the sanctification of the sabbath, to make this his plan; to spread out before his readers all those passages which he should find, in the Old and New Testaments, relating to the subject of the holy sabbath; accompanying them with some brief explanatory and practical remarks. He thought that nothing could be adapted to have so much effect on a Christian community, as to hear what the Lord of the sabbath himself had said concerning this institution. He remembered that Christ had said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are *life*."

The above plan was adopted and the work entered upon without any intention of its being delivered from the pulpit. But before much progress was made in its preparation, it was determined to put it in the form of pulpit discourses; for which a common text was selected suitable to the plan of the work; (and which it is acknowledged might have been equally suitable to any other series of discourses undertaken on a similar plan.) The writer found it difficult to bring so many passages of scripture into view, and accompany each passage with a few remarks, and yet compress his work into the small compass

which is occupied by a tract. Instead of a pamphlet, which was all that he first thought of, he found himself unable to carry out his plan short of producing a volume.

If this work has already exerted any good influence in promoting the sanctification of the sabbath, the author desires to be thankful that it was ever put into his heart to prepare it. And should its republication, at this interesting and critical period, do any thing to further the piety of the church and that of its offspring, particularly as it respects a more exemplary observance of the Lord's day; and should it afford any aid to those men who are worthily employed in seeking to convince the public that sabbath desecration, while it is a sin against God, is at the same time destructive of our national prosperity, the writer will feel himself laid under new obligation to render thanks to the Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. Will not the friends of the sabbath and the friends of God, into whose hands this manual shall come, ask Him to make it instrumental of doing something to advance the interests of His kingdom, when he who wrote it shall have gone to his long home? That a Divine blessing may rest on all who shall read what is here written, is the devout wish of

THE AUTHOR.

DURHAM, N. Y. Sept. 1845.

# DISCOURSES ON THE SABBATH.

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## FIRST DISCOURSE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures.—

“THE scriptures,” or, as it is literally, *the writings*, do evidently in this place mean those holy writings, which we call the word of God. The Old Testament scriptures were written before the coming of Christ. To these he repeatedly referred for the proof of his Messiahship, and of his doctrines. Jesus Christ most certainly treated these writings as being the inspired word of God, and a perfect standard of truth; by which every thing relating to him and his kingdom, should be tried and determined. The holy scriptures, including both Testaments, make a rich store-house, from which the man of God is thoroughly furnished to every good work. Here he may learn what to believe about God, his law, his government, and his grace. Here he may learn the whole of his duty, both towards God, his fellow men, and himself. If he is ever at a loss on any point, let him immediately repair to these divine oracles, and he will here become acquainted with the decisions of Him who cannot err. Let him studiously and prayerfully search the scriptures, even as men search the mines for silver, and as they dig for hidden treasures; and he will not fail to find instruction.

This passage has not been chosen at this time, with a

view to prove the divine inspiration of the scriptures; or to show the importance of reading them; or to point out the manner in which this duty should be performed, though these things would naturally grow out of the text: but it is my design, in this and several succeeding discourses, to comply with the Savior's command which is before us, so far as it relates to one specific point, namely, *the weekly sabbath*. By going through the Bible, with our eye fixed upon this one point, we shall be likely to obtain more distinct views of it, than we should, if our attention were divided among a variety of objects. The inspiration of the scriptures will be taken for granted; and the importance of hearing what God himself has said about his sabbath, cannot be disputed.

Let us, my hearers, in the very outset of these discourses, feel how solemn a thing it is to come, to inquire at the oracles of the living God. A humble and a solemn frame of mind becomes us while making these inquiries, and while we listen to hear what God the Lord shall speak. Let it be remembered, that we are come to inquire on a very practical subject. If the Lord has made a sabbath, he has made it to be remembered, and to be kept holy. Therefore let us hear the will of God with an *obedient* ear.

The scheme of the following discourses is, to search the Bible from the beginning to the end, to see what the sabbath is—what it is to sanctify it, and what it is to profane and pollute it—and to become acquainted with the scripture history of the sanctification, and profanation of the sabbath, that we may learn how different are the feelings of the divine Lawgiver towards such as sanctify, and such as profane his holy day: that we may also discover what an entirely contrary influence these different ways of spending the sabbath have on the cause of God and the prosperity of nations. None of those passages, which are considered as capable of materially aiding us in these inquiries, will be designedly

passed over. After a new text on the subject is introduced, it is proposed to make such remarks and practical observations, as are suggested by it ; and then proceed to the next in order.

Without any further introductory remarks, I enter on my proposed plan, attended, as I hope, by your fervent prayers, that both the preacher and his hearers may be led into the truth ; and that through the truth we may be sanctified.

The first information which we have about the weekly sabbath is Gen. ii. 2, 3.

*And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made : and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it ; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

On this passage it may be observed, 1. That the weekly sabbath is not a *human* institution. It was *God*, the Creator of the world, who instituted it. 2. He gave a sanction to the institution by his own example. Six days did the Creator work ; but on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3. The weekly sabbath is a very *early* institution. It was appointed, and observed the very first week of time. It is no part of the law of ceremonies, which law was occasioned by the entrance of sin ; for the sabbath was established before sin had entered, and would have been obligatory on Adam and his offspring if sin had not been known among them. Therefore the abolition of the law of ceremonies does not affect the weekly sabbath, though it does away those sabbatical institutions, which originated with the ceremonial law. These sabbaths, which were purely *Jewish*, in their original, must have been the sabbaths

referred to by the apostle in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. iv. 10, 11: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." This distinction between days, made by the ceremonial law, must have been what he had in view, Rom. xiv. 5, 6. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike."\*

On the passage before us we proceed to observe, 4. That God did two things to the sabbath, to distinguish it from the other days of the week; 1st. He *sanctified* it; and 2dly. He *blessed* it. The Lord has made the sabbath a holy day; and when we keep it *holy* to the Lord, he makes it a day of *blessing*, i. e. a day in which he will, in a peculiar sense, meet with us and bless us, and cause the sanctified day to be very useful to our best, our immortal interests.

Objection. But how can *time* be *sanctified*? how can a day be holy? Ans. 1st. It is the language which God himself uses, and therefore cannot be foolish. 2ndly. No one supposes that time itself is capable of *holy affections*: nor does the holiness of the sabbath consist in our having holy affections on that day. Such affections we are required to have every day in the week; and such affections Adam and Eve had continually until they fell; but even then they were required to sanctify the seventh day, in distinction from the other days. Holy affections are implied in an acceptable sanctification of the sabbath; but this is not all. We answer, 3dly. The holiness of time consists in its being separated from secular business and worldly concerns to the *immediate service of God*. The temple was called a holy place, because, in distinction from other houses, it was the *Lord's* house; it was the house of prayer. It was profaned by being made *a house of merchandise*, as well as by being

\* Something more may be seen on these passages in a note connected with the Fourth Discourse.

made a *den of thieves*. In the same sense in which the temple was a *holy place*, the sabbath is a *holy day*,—a day separated from the business and avocations of this life, to the service of God in devotional exercises and religious duties.

EXOD. xvi. 22—30.

*And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man : and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD ; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe ; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade, and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day ; for to-day is a sabbath unto the LORD : to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it ; but on the seventh day which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws ? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days : abide ye every man in his place ; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.*

On this passage we observe, 1. That the apostasy has not done away the obligation to sanctify the weekly sabbath. The same hallowed day, of which we read before the fall of man, we here find again ; and it still remains a holy day. 2. From this passage we learn, that it is our duty to remember during the week, that the sabbath is coming, and be so prepared for it, as not to be obliged to earn, or look up, or be

engaged in any great labor in preparing our food on this day. The portion of the manna, which was to be the food of the sabbath, they were directed to gather, and bake, or seethe, on the day which preceded it. It is lawful to *eat* on the sabbath as we do on other days; but not to *gather*. 3. The Lord's great concern for his holy day was strikingly manifested by his giving a double portion of the manna on the preceding day, and withholding it on that day; and by his preserving that which was laid up the day before from breeding worms and becoming loathsome, as it did when it was at other times kept over night. 4. We are taught by this portion of scripture, that we need not be afraid of being impoverished by a holy resting one day every week. *See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days.* Let it never be forgotten, that it is the LORD who has given us the sabbath. And let it be remembered, that it is the same Lord that gives us our bread, and who supplies all our needs. We may therefore rest assured, that *six* days in the week are sufficient to procure the bread of *seven*. To disbelieve this, is to deny the providence of the Lord of the sabbath, and is deeply tainted with atheism. 5. We see that men are prone to seek gain on the sabbath-day by doing the work of the week, notwithstanding they may have been strictly cautioned against it. Some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather. The Lord was greatly displeased with the disobedient and covetous spirit which they manifested. "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"

Let us now turn our attention to the 4th commandment. It is contained in Exod. xx. 8—11.

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not*



*do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

Observe, 1. The weekly sabbath is placed among the ten commandments, which are a summary of the *moral law*. In this respect it is honored above the sabbatical years ; or the three annual feasts, the new moons, and such like institutions. These commandments were written with the finger of God on tables of stone, to denote their preciousness, importance, and *durableness*. It shewed that these commandments were to last to the end, without waxing old and vanishing away. The command, to sanctify one day in the week, has the same honorable place, as the command, to worship Jehovah alone ; or as the command, to honor our parents, and the command, to do no murder.

Objection. It cannot in itself be wrong to work on one day, more than to work on another ; therefore the requirement to keep holy one particular day in the week, cannot be of a *moral* nature.

Let the objector remember, that the other nine commands of the decalogue are evidently of a moral nature, and this, which enjoins the observance of a weekly sabbath, was placed among them by the Divine Lawgiver himself : neither ought we to suppose, that it was an oversight in him to place it where he did. He who lays his hand on the sabbath, to drive it out from among the perpetually binding laws of God, let him beware what he does. Let him review the matter—let him not think that in this he is doing God service !

A word more on the *moral* nature of the sabbath. The *first* commandment teaches, that we are under moral and

indispensable obligation to *love* God supremely. The *second* commandment requires, that we *worship* him, and him alone. If it is our duty to love and worship our Creator, it is a matter of moral obligation to take some time from other concerns for this worship. It is essential to a godly life, that some portion of time every day should be redeemed from secular duties for the duties of devotion: and the all-wise God has seen that it was absolutely necessary for the best good of the human race, and especially for the promotion of godliness, that *one* day in *seven* should be *a day of worship*. The obligation to keep holy the sabbath, is as great as the obligation to seek the preservation and advancement of the cause of true religion in the world.

2. You notice, that the commandment, requiring the observance of the sabbath, is introduced with a caution not to forget it—"Remember the sabbath day." It should be remembered all the week, that after so many days the sabbath will return again; and we should feel ourselves bound to shape our business through the week, so as to be in the best manner prepared for its return. And the caution at the beginning of the commandment, requires us to know when the holy day has returned, and to conduct ourselves accordingly.

3. In looking over the commandment we notice, that *all our* work must be done in the six days before the sabbath. By *our work*, is not meant works of darkness (which are forbidden on all days,) but *secular* work, pertaining to things of this life.

4. Notice, On the sabbath we may not do *any* work, that is, any kind of this secular business. It would have made the commandment too long, if all kinds of worldly employments had been particularized: but they are all included—they are all forbidden to be done on the consecrated day. "Thou shalt not do *any* work."

5. It cannot but be noticed, that the commandment binds

us to use all our *influence* and *authority*, to preserve the sabbath from being profaned by others. If we have sons and daughters, men-servants and maid-servants, horses, or cattle, we are required to see to it, that the sabbath is not profaned by any of them. This forbids us even to let a horse or carriage on the Lord's day: or to that man, who, in opposition to the commandment, we know designs on that day to pursue his journey. Let our rulers, the fathers of the country, inquire whether they are not bound by the commandment to exert themselves, not only to keep holy the sabbath themselves, but also to see to it, that all the inhabitants of the land, and the strangers, who sojourn among us, are not suffered so greatly to pollute it with impunity.\*

6. This commandment seems to imply, that keeping holy the seventh day was an acknowledgment of God, as the Creator of the world; and, of consequence, that the refusing to keep it holy, would be a denial of the God who is above. Let this thought weigh on all our minds. When we conduct as though there was no weekly sabbath, we conduct as though there was no God—no Creator of the world.

#### EXOD. xxiii. 12.

*Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed.*

From this passage it appears, that one design of the sabbath is to give all an opportunity to rest from hard and

\* Magistrates are to be a terror to evil-doers. They ought to be a terror not only to murderers, thieves and forgers; but also to adulterers, drunkards and profane swearers. So ought they to be a terror to *sabbath-breakers*. Profaning the sabbath is not only an *impiety*, but also an *immorality*. It manifestly has a demoralizing effect on society, like profane oaths, intemperate drinking and gambling.

fatiguing labor. This reason is also assigned where the command is repeated in Deuteronomy. The benevolent Creator pleads the cause of the servant, and even of the dumb beast. He commands that we let them rest from their labor. In this connexion let me suggest this query: Is it consistent with the Creator's design in appointing the day of rest, to keep servants all day employed in cookery, and in waiting on visiting companies and parties of pleasure? Not to ask in this place, whether such parties of pleasure are consistent with keeping the day holy to the Lord?

Let me further ask, whether this design of the command, does not clearly forbid the teamster to proceed on his journey on the holy day. If there is ever a time when the ox and the ass (or the horse) need this rest which our common Creator has provided for them, it is when they are from day to day, through the whole week, employed on the road in drawing us, or our cumbersome loads. It ought not to be forgotten, that these creatures have another Owner beside us. We have no right to use them without His leave; and He has not given us leave to use them in this manner on the sacred day of rest.

But it will by some be objected: "Then you have no right to use them to go to the place of worship." To this it may be replied: That we have a right to use them, if they are needed, wherever we have a right to go ourselves. If we have a right, in an extreme case, to go for a physician twenty, or even forty miles on the sabbath, we have a right to make use of a horse to carry us this distance. So, if we have a right to go to the house of God on the sabbath, (which none will dispute) we have a right to *ride* there, if the distance be such as to make this necessary or more convenient.

## EXOD. xxxi. 14—17.

*Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore: for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.*

On this passage I would remark, 1. That in the church of Israel, *death* was the punishment to be inflicted on the sabbath-breaker. Every crime was not to be punished with death; but defiling the holy day, was among the crimes to be thus punished by divine command. Here we learn how *God* looks on the breach of the fourth commandment. It no doubt appears as ill-deserving to him *now* as it did *then*. The church of God then dwelt alone, and had, by the express direction of heaven, power to exercise all the authority, which is now termed *civil* and *ecclesiastical*: They were therefore to inflict corporal punishments, as well as church censures and excommunications. This gave opportunity for the Holy One of Israel to show his feelings, even in this world, towards the man who defiled his sabbath.

2. We notice in this passage, that the attention of every individual is called up to the dreadful evil of profaning the sabbath. It is said, "*Every one* that defileth it shall surely be put to death." "*Whosoever* doeth any work therein, *that soul* shall be cut off from amongst his people." Let *every individual man* and *woman*, and *child*, throughout the land, remember the commandment comes to *him* and to

*her.* Not one of us has a right to wait for the *nation* to hear and obey; God speaks to each one of us, in our individual capacity.

3. In this passage, the sabbath is said to be a sign between the Lord and the children of Israel. A strict, conscientious, and spiritual observance of the weekly sabbath, is throughout all generations one of the distinguishing marks of a true Israelite. It is one of those ways, in which the pious cheerfully acknowledge the Lord as their God.

Some have thought, that because the sabbath is said to be a sign between God and *Israel*, that the obligation to keep it is not binding on us *Gentiles*. But as well may it be said, that because a holy life is that by which God's people are distinguished from others, therefore they alone are required to be holy.

#### EXOD. xxxiv. 21.

*Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing-time and in harvest thou shalt rest.*

The requirement to observe the sabbath in *earing-time* and in *harvest*, serves to give a clear idea how extensive the command is. It shows, that the obligation to regard the sabbath, runs through all the seasons of the year. It is not a duty confined to the winter when our harvests are all gathered in; but is binding in the summer, and even in harvest, the most hurrying part of the summer.

Let those who think it is lawful to travel on common journeys on the sabbath-day, seriously examine the above passage. Let those who attend upon their maple orchards, and upon their distilleries, candidly ask, whether the command to rest in earing-time and harvest, does not reach their case, and oblige them to rest.\* It is unreasonable for us to

\* When this treatise was written, more than thirty years ago, the author was grieved with a practice, which he knew existed to some extent, of working at

require that the Lawgiver should particularize every thing. We may fairly reason from the greater to the less. If a more pressing and important work is forbidden to be done on the sabbath, then certainly a less important and necessary work must also be forbidden.

EXOD. xxxv. 2, 3.

*Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.*

All that is new in this text, is the prohibition to kindle a fire on the sabbath-day. To understand this aright has been attended with some difficulty. Fire is needed in the winter to make us comfortable; and the sabbath was not made to destroy our health and comfort. But it is a clear case, that all those fires which are not needed to render us comfortable through the sabbath, should not be kindled on that day. If it be ever necessary, that furnaces, brick-kilns, and coal-pits, should continue to burn during the sabbath, (on the necessity of which I shall not now pretend to decide) still it must be wrong to *kindle* such fires on this holy day. If it is right for mariners at sea to keep under sail on the Lord's day, still I cannot think that it is right for them to set sail and leave the port on the Lord's day: nor do I think such a thing will be practised in the Millennium. If in that period ships in the midst of the sea, where no anchor can hold them, keep on their course, no great work will be undertaken on the Lord's day, which unexpected events do not render necessary; but the day, even

the distilling business on the Lord's day. He is now constrained to say, that in his opinion the whole business of making intoxicating liquors for a beverage, is repugnant to the best interests of the human family.

in the midst of the sea, will be distinguished from the other days of the week as holy to the Lord. Is it not to be expected in that day, when the fear of God will be before the eyes of all, that steamboats, packets, and coasters, will not only forbear to *weigh anchor* on the day of holy rest, but also, when sailing up and down the rivers and along the coast, that they will *cast anchor*, if this can be done; and so rest from their own work, and engage in the work peculiar to the day, even if they cannot go on shore and repair to a house of worship?

LEVIT. xix. 3.

*And ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.*

We remark in this passage, that a filial respect to parents, and a sanctification of the Lord's sabbaths, are commanded at one breath. We can no more treat our Creator with respect, without keeping the holy sabbath, than we can honor our father and mother, without obeying their commands. Parents, God has told our children to honor us, and at the same time has told us to honor him by keeping his sabbaths; now if we do not keep holy the sabbath, and teach and command our children to do so, ought we to expect that our children will honor and obey us? If children learn to treat their Father in heaven with respect, there is little doubt but that they will respect their earthly parents.

LEVIT. xxiii. 3.

*Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.*

This passage reflects some additional light on the command enjoining a holy sabbath. We notice, 1. That it



teaches that the sabbath is a day for public worship; for this is what is meant by its being *an holy convocation*. *Convocation* is a meeting together; and a *holy convocation* is a meeting together for holy or religious purposes. All other convocations or meetings on the sabbath, are a great desecration of holy time. But meeting together for worship, and for religious instruction, is perfectly congenial with the spirit of the command. There are none who love a *holy day*, but that love a *holy convocation* on that day. And it is worthy of observation, that most commonly where public worship is not observed on the sabbath, there the day itself is not regarded.

2. We notice that the sabbath is to be kept holy to the Lord *in all our dwellings*. It was not only to be observed by those who were around the tabernacle; or those who dwelt in the holy city; but it was to be observed through all their camps, in all their tents—through all their cities, villages, and towns; and in all their houses. During those twenty-four hours which the Lord challenges as his day, the time is holy; as much when we are in our own houses, as when we are in the house of the Lord. If we can attend public worship, it is our duty to do it; but if this be impracticable, still the day should be kept holy to the Lord, *in our dwellings*. And if we do attend public worship, this is not all the holy time which belongs to the sabbath; the other parts of the day belong to the Lord, as well as this. He who keeps holy time only while he is in the house of worship, makes the sabbath no more of a holy day, than he makes any day of the week a holy day, if he should only happen to attend on some public and religious exercise on such day. But is the Lord's day no more holy than any day, in which we attend on a lecture or a funeral? The minutes which we spend in worship on a week day, may be termed as it respects us, the holy parts of that day; but the rest of the day is common; and even these portions of

the day, devoted to worship, might have been employed in business, and other portions devoted to worship instead of them, and this would not have been a profanation of the time: but the sabbath is all of it holy time, whether we are immediately engaged in worship, or not; and we have no right to substitute other time in its stead.

LEVIT. xxvi. 2.

*Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.*

We find this command, in the same words, in another place in this book. Here we find the command to keep the sabbath, and to reverence the Lord's *sanctuary*, are very properly joined together. They who are willing the Lord should have a *day* for his worship, are also willing that he should have a *place* for it. And it is uniformly the case, that they who love the sabbath, love the sanctuary. If in the house of the Lord, humble and spiritual prayers are offered to him, with suitable confessions and thanksgivings; if his praises are sung, his word read and explained in a right manner, all who delight in the sabbath, will be pleased to be present. They will not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is. They will say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts!" They who come to the sanctuary to exhibit their costly apparel, to see their friends, and contrive parties for the ensuing week; or who come from custom; these do not reverence the sanctuary, nor *keep holy* the day of the Lord. That man, who views the sabbath as a day HOLY TO THE LORD, will feel, when he enters the place of worship, the impression of the patriarch, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

## Verses 34, 35.

*Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land ; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest : because it did not rest in your sabbaths when ye dwelt upon it.*

The same sentiment is repeated a few verses below. There were other days, and even years, of rest enjoined on the church of Israel, besides the weekly sabbath : but this alone was placed in the decalogue, and more is said about this than about the others ; this is therefore undoubtedly included in the passage before us. From this passage we see that the people of God were forewarned, that a neglect of the sabbath would be one of those things which would provoke the Lord to give them up into the hands of their enemies. And let those nations who know that the Lord has reserved the sabbath as a day holy to himself, be assured that if they disregard this reasonable institution of the Supreme Governor, their sin will find them out.

## NUMB. XV. 32—36.

*And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death ; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died ; as the Lord commanded Moses.*

On this passage it may be remarked, 1. That this breach of the sabbath was a *presumptuous* sin. It seems to be

introduced as an example of the sin of presumption, which had been just mentioned. The Lord had said to this man, as well as to others, "Thou shalt not do any work on the seventh day;" and the man knew that he had said it. But just as if the Lord of Hosts were not worth regarding, he said, I will do some work on the sabbath-day. Let none of us plead the cause of this transgressor, since the Lord himself has condemned him. It makes but little difference what kind of work we do on the sabbath, whether we gather *sticks* or *logs*, if we do it in contempt of the authority of the Most High.

2. On this passage we are led to remark, that God has not made this law respecting the sabbath as a scare-crow; what he has said, he will stand to. When he sits as a Judge, he will be found the same, as when he acted in the capacity of a Lawgiver. He had said, "Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death." Now a case had occurred of the violation of the command, and the matter was referred to the Lord, to know what should be done with him who had violated it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death."

God has not made a law to be trifled with. He did not make it without good reason; and there is the same reason for maintaining it, which there was for making it. If any should think that the Divine Lawgiver was too severe in punishing the breach of the sabbath with death, let them remember, that a sorer punishment will fall on sabbath-breakers in the coming world!

3. This passage may admit of another remark,—it is this: That the *whole community* should set their faces against those who profane the sabbath: especially may it be expected, that "all the congregation" of the Lord will unite

in disallowing, and publicly manifesting their disallowance, of the profanation of holy time.

NUMB. xxviii. 9, 10.

*And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof; This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.*

On this passage we note, 1. That there are some *religious duties* to be performed every day in the week. According to divine appointment, there was to be a morning and evening sacrifice every day in the year; and the peculiar duties of the sabbath-day were not to supersede, or set aside, the continual burnt offering and his drink offering. One thing most evidently pointed out by this burnt offering, every morning and evening through the year, was the obligation lying upon us all to offer up a morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise on the sabbath, and also on all other days.

2. It is worthy of notice from the scripture before us, that the sabbath is to be a day of *extraordinary devotions*. Besides the common religious duties of every day, other religious duties are to be added. The sabbath indeed is well described by being called, *a day of religion*; as the other six days are called *days of labor*. Closet prayer, family prayer, reading the scriptures and books of piety, and communicating religious instruction to our households, and speaking of the things of the kingdom of God; together with public prayers and praises, and hearing the preached word; these, and such like duties, should be the *business* of the day holy to the Lord.

## SECOND DISCOURSE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures.——

IN obedience to this command of the Savior, I proceed to the examination of other portions of scripture ; especially as it relates to the subject of the holy sabbath.

NEHEM. ix. 13, 14.

*And gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.*

Note, 1. The holy sabbath is instanced as one of those right judgments, true laws, and good statutes, and commandments, which God gave to Israel. The sabbath ought ever to be viewed as a *reasonable* and *good* command. There are few commands in the book of God, which are more calculated to promote the good of society here, and to prepare for glory hereafter.

Note, 2. The holy sabbath is not spoken of as a *new* institution, beginning with the Sinai covenant ; or confined to the people of Israel ; but this day, already sanctified, was *made known* unto them. The sabbath, we have already seen, was instituted as soon as the work of creation was finished, and was appointed to be observed by Adam and all his children. But by departing from God, the holiness of the seventh day of the week was disregarded and forgotten. When God revived true religion in the family of

Abraham, he revived the knowledge of the holy, blessed sabbath. And in the passage before us, (which is a part of a solemn prayer to God,) it is spoken of as a great mercy shown to Israel, that they were made acquainted with the holy sabbath. O that we *Americans* might be disposed with united voice, to thank the Lord for making known to *us* his holy sabbath!

## NEHEM. X. 31.

*And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath-day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day.*——

On this text we remark, 1. That the commercial intercourse, which exists among men, is one fruitful cause of the profanation of the sabbath. The Jews might carry on a commerce with the heathen: but as the heathen did not observe the sabbath, they would be inclined to come to market on that, as well as on the other days of the week. This proved a snare to the Jews, as is evident from the scripture now before us. And no doubt it is a snare to many at the present day, who seem desirous to make the sabbath something more than a day of worldly business.

2. From the text before us we learn, that when we cannot *restrain others* from the profanation of holy time, we should be sure and restrain *ourselves*. The Jews were now in a dependant state, and they were surrounded by those who did not regard the sabbath. If they could not prevent the heathen from bringing their ware and victuals to market, still they could agree together, that they would not buy it of them on that day. If others will profane the sabbath, we must see to it, that we do not suffer them to draw us into their loose and pernicious practices. If the people in the country will carry their produce to market on the sabbath, let the market towns not encourage this practice. If I can-

not prevent my neighbor from proposing to make a bargain with me on the Lord's day, still I may keep myself from manifesting a willingness to bargain with him ; and so keep from helping forward the profanation of the day. If I cannot prevent my neighbor from introducing some worldly topic of discourse, unsuitable for the sabbath, still I may wave it, or propose a topic more suitable to the day. If you cannot prevent a neighbor from calling to pay you a visit on the Lord's day, you can certainly keep from returning the visit on that day, in case you cannot summon up courage to tell him plainly, that you do not wish to receive or pay visits on the holy sabbath. It would no doubt be highly proper to manifest your disapprobation of this practice, both by words and actions.

We further notice in this text, that those Jews, who seemed disposed for a thorough reformation, agreed not to buy any wares on the sabbath, *or on the holy day*. By "the holy day" here spoken of, in addition to the sabbath, we are to understand any one of those holy days which the Lord had commanded them to observe ; and in which he had required them to refrain from servile labor. These holy days are not now binding on us, as the weekly sabbath is ; but the days which we set apart for fasting and thanksgiving resemble them. Our Fasts and Thanksgivings should be *holy to the Lord*. In them we should refrain from buying and selling, and that business of this life which we lawfully pursue on other days.

NEHEM. xiii. 15—22.

*In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses ; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day ; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein,*



*which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants sat at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates to sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

In this portion of scripture several lessons of instruction relative to the sabbath are taught:

1. That some of those to whom the sabbath is made known, and even some who profess to be the people of God, are guilty of the most evident breaches of it. It was in *Judah* that some were seen treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, and attending to other secular business. The command, which they had said they would obey, required that in the sabbath they should not do *any work*: but with that command before them, they were doing *all manner of work*. It is likely, however, that they invented some excuse for it all.

2. By the scripture before us we are taught, that, in Bible times, no distinction was made between bringing into market *fish*, and other commodities, on the sabbath-day. This distinction must therefore be an invention of modern times. In the city of New-York, and in other cities, and sea-port towns, it is not allowed to bring in flesh, vegetables and fruits, on the sabbath-day; but in these places, even on the morning of the holy day, you may hear the horns blow, to call you to the fish market. Let me ask, what reason can be given for this profanation of the Lord's day? Cannot the citizens do one day in the week without feasting on the fish which are newly caught? If it should be said, that the fishermen cannot preserve them from taking hurt through the sabbath, let them learn then not to catch them so near to the time of the drawing on of this well known day of rest. Let them *remember* the sabbath-day.

3. We learn from the passage before us, that those who would wish to reform the nation with respect to the observance of the sabbath, may have occasion to contend even with the leading men of the nation. Nehemiah "contended with the *nobles* of Judah, and said, what evil thing is this ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?" It is important to labor with *them* on this point, for several reasons. *First*, These, generally, either make the laws of the nation, or administer justice. They are therefore to be a terror to evil doers. *Secondly*, The *nobles*, or chief men, are very apt to disregard the sabbath *themselves*: Even those who make laws to punish others, will often conduct as if they themselves were above the law. *Their* bad example in this respect, has a most pernicious effect on the community. In the *third* place, It is peculiarly important that the rulers and leading men of the nation should remember to keep holy the sabbath, because *their contempt* of the command of God peculiarly exposes the nation to judgments. David's pride in numbering the people, brought the pestilence on his

realm. What the rulers and leading men of the nation are, that character the *nation* is considered as possessing. And this is one thing which gives significancy to that proverb, "When the wicked bear rule the people mourn."

4. By the passage before us we are taught, that the profanation of the sabbath is one of those things which may be expected to bring down God's judgments. "Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." On infidel minds, it is not expected this will have any weight. But to those who believe the scriptures to be a true declaration of the divine will, must not this record appear weighty? It is here declared that *God* brings evil on the nation and city—and this evil is a display of his *wrath*. And here his wrath is said to be aroused by seeing his holy day trodden under foot. It is God who *sends* the evil; but it is we who *procure* it: "Yet *ye* bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." Let the profaners of the sabbath, throughout this American Republic, know, that they are bringing more wrath on this nation by their contemptuous disregard of holy time! The nation are already groaning under the rod of Heaven; and will ye bring more wrath upon this people by profaning the sabbath?

5. From the passage before us we are taught how it behoves us to be in readiness to begin the sanctification of the sabbath, at its very commencement. There is a precise time when the sabbath begins and when it ends. And I can see no reason why the first and last parts of the holy day are not as sacred as the middle of it. It is pretty evident that the sabbath did commence, (if it does not now,) at the *setting of the sun*. Indeed, according to the Bible reckoning, all the days of the week began and ended at this time. If this original method of reckoning days is still to be observed in application to holy time, (and I cannot dis-

cover that the *Bible* has pointed out any other method,) then the sabbath is still to be sanctified from evening to evening, without being considered as a part of two days.\*

\* It was not among one of the original objects of the author, in this work, to contend with those who differ from him in the time of *beginning* the sabbath. Neither is it now his design to contend with them; but he has endeavored to follow where the scripture has led him: and the above passage out of Nehemiah, seemed naturally to lead him to say something upon the importance of being exact in beginning to sanctify the day as soon as it commenced. There are many who agree with the author of these discourses in a belief, that the sabbath begins and ends at the setting of the sun. Certainly it is important that we, who believe this, should be taught to act consistently with our belief, by giving to the Lord what we consider as the beginning of the day which he challenges as his own. To stir us up to the duty of sanctifying the evening which precedes the day, we must see on what we ground our belief that this is a part of holy time.

In the first chapter in the Bible we read, "And the evening and the morning were the first day." The first day began when time began; and time began as soon as any thing was created. But the creation did not begin with light, but with darkness. The evening, or the dark part of the twenty-four hours, preceded, and the morning, or the light part, followed. After the sun was created to rule the day, its leaving the earth by setting beyond the western horizon, served to divide between the days. This appears by Judg. xiv. 18. Samson put forth a riddle which must be declared within the seven days of the feast. "And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day, *before the sun went down*, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" This was as much as to say, when the sun went down the day would end, and it would be too late to expound the riddle. The setting, or the rising of the sun, is the most natural division of days; it is a dividing line known to all, poor as well as rich—to those who are without clocks and watches, as well as to those who have them. It is therefore natural to suppose, reasoning *a priori*, that the Creator would, especially on account of the holy day, fix upon one or the other of these, either the rising or the setting of the sun, as the time of beginning days. It is pretty evident that he did not fix on the rising of the sun, but on its going down. It appears this was the line which separated between the sabbath and the day which followed it, in the time of Christ; as we infer from Mark i. 32, 33; "And at even, *when the sun did set*, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door." From the connexion it will be seen, that this was a sabbath-day which is here spoken of. It will also be remembered, that such crowds did not gather around the Savior to obtain healing on the sabbath-day. The Jews even thought it unlawful for

This pious governor of Judah, whose heart was greatly set upon a thorough reformation, noticed that if the market was allowed to be kept up, and the gates of the city kept open until sun-down, the *beginning* of the holy day would be exposed to profanation, he therefore commanded the gates of Jerusalem (which it will be remembered was surrounded by mountains) to be shut by that time the gates began to be darkened by the shadow of the mountains, before the sabbath. Twilight is not what is meant; for then it would have been said, When *it* began to be dark: but now it is, when the *gates* of Jerusalem began to be dark. The sun still shone on the hill of Zion, which was in the midst of the city. By this then we are taught, that it is sinful to order business so as just to get out of the market, the merchant's store, the justice's court, the military review, the mill, the raising-bee, or the social visit, at the

him to heal those diseased persons, which naturally fell in his way. But at the setting of the sun, they all flocked about him, as though the restraint which had been imposed was now taken off. So late as this then it appears, that the setting of the sun was viewed as the end of the sabbath: and the Lord of the sabbath himself found no fault with them on this account, as though they had been guilty of an innovation. But it will be said, Does not that passage, John xx. 19, give a different view of the time of the ending of the day? "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week." The passage, at first reading, seems to give the idea that this evening belonged to the first day of the week; but the clause, "being the first day of the week," may refer to "the same day," and not to the evening. When days were reckoned from sun-down to sun-down, still the evening was wont to be named in connexion with the day which preceded it. By comparing Levit. xxiii. verse 27, with verse 32, it appears that a part of that time which is first called the tenth day, is afterwards called the ninth day at even. The ninth day at even meant the beginning of the tenth day.

I do not pretend with absolute certainty to know, that Christ did not change, not only the day, but the time of beginning it. But if he did, I have not yet seen sufficient evidence to convince me of it. If he did, I do not know what point of time he fixed on for its commencement. But in this matter let us not censoriously judge one another. Let all who regard the sabbath, however they may differ as to the time of beginning it, unite their influence to promote its sanctification.

moment when our days of labor end ; and so be obliged to take the first part of the *Lord's* time, to return to our homes. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."\*

6. By the passage before us we are taught the great importance of zeal and perseverance in a reformer. This best of governors met with opposition : but it did not discourage him. He did not say, Nothing can be done. He did not bear the sword in vain. He was a terror to evil doers. Whether he made sabbath-breakers love the sabbath or not, he made them forbear to disturb the peace of Jerusalem. "From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath."

ISA. lvi. 2—7.

*Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it : that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined him-*

\* It is quite a question, if we possessed the spirit of Nehemiah—if we had his zeal for preserving the purity of the sabbath, whether we should fix upon the preceding day for such business or recreation, as is likely to intrude itself into holy time. Would a justice of the peace, with the spirit of this reformer, select from all the days of the week Saturday in the afternoon, to appoint his court ? Would the military officer, with the same spirit, take this time for that military review which might be as well attended on any other day ? If we all felt towards the sabbath like this noble governor, would that afternoon in the week, which shuts down upon holy time, be the most frequently taken to do those jobs, which collect such numbers as cannot be easily dispersed in season to prevent an encroachment upon its sacred hours ? Will those females, who have a high reverence for the Lord's day, except in extraordinary cases, take the afternoon which immediately precedes it, for a visiting party ? If in these parties, their conversation should be a suitable preparation for the approaching sabbath, still there will be the appearance of evil, which we are commanded to avoid, as they will not usually be able, all of them, to reach their homes, until after the sabbath has commenced. In this point of view, the remark applies with force only to those who believe the day to commence at the going down of the sun,

*self to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people : neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant ; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters : I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant ; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer : their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar ; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*

1. We notice that taking hold of God's covenant, and keeping the sabbath, go hand in hand. If the son of the stranger becomes joined to the Lord, he is expected to keep the sabbath from polluting it. If he does the things which please God, this is sure to be one of them.

2. It is worthy of notice that keeping the sabbath is an important part of the obedience of the *Gentile* as well as *Jewish* church. The passage before us speaks of a time, when the house of the Lord is to become a house of prayer for *all people* : when eunuchs and the sons of the stranger shall have a place in the church. And from this prediction we learn that even in this gospel day, the sabbath of the Lord is to be greatly revered. Dr. Scott, commenting on this passage, observes, "The repeated mention of keeping the sabbath, in this place, which evidently gives a decided preference to spiritual worship and holiness of life, above all external observances, and refers to the time when the cere-

monial law would be abrogated, strongly implies the obligation of the Christian sabbath."

ISA. lviii. 13, 14.

*If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

This passage reflects much light upon the holy sabbath.

1. It points out three ways by which the sabbath is trodden under foot, or encroached upon.

*First.* By doing *our own ways*. Six days are our *own*, in distinction from the seventh, which the Lord calls *his* day. By "our own ways," in the place before us, we are to understand the same as *our work, our business*. In the commandment it is said, Six days shalt thou labor and do all *thy work*. In the same way we are to understand "our own," in this whole passage; not as necessarily implying that which would be wrong to be done on the working days; otherwise, piety would lead us to avoid them on other days, as well as the holy day of the Lord.

The *second* way, here mentioned, of encroaching on the sabbath, is by doing or finding our *own pleasure*. *Pleasure*, in distinction from work, is recreation or amusement. Some recreations are vain and sinful on any day; these must of course be forbidden on the day which is holy to the Lord. Others, when under due regulations, are admissible on the week days; such as visiting our friends, or riding abroad to take the air, please our eyes, and recreate



our minds with the delightful scenes of nature : but these also are forbidden on the sabbath. In the passage before us, the laying aside of our amusements and recreations, is enjoined with emphasis: "If thou turn away thy foot—from doing thy *pleasure* on my holy day." It is repeated in the same verse—"nor finding thine own *pleasure*."

It is said, there are some who are very scrupulous in not doing their own *work*, who think it perfectly lawful to find their own *pleasure*, or recreation, on the Lord's holy day. Do not such resemble the teachers in the time of our Savior, who made a mighty difference between swearing by the *temple*, and by the *gold* of the temple? They said, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. So these seem to say, Whosoever shall *labor* on the sabbath, he is an infidel: but whosoever shall *only play* on the sabbath, he is a good Christian. To such it might be said, Ye fools and blind, for whether is the greater offence, to *sweat* away the sabbath, or to *sport* it away? There is a great difference between the Lord's *holy days*, and men's *holidays*. The former are days eminently designed to prepare us for heaven; the latter are days peculiarly calculated to fit us for hell. If the sabbath is considered as a *holiday*, a day of pastime, instead of a *holy day*, a day of religion, it must be, instead of the *best*, the *worst*, and most dangerous day in the week. It would seem, that the devil could not have invented a stratagem more calculated to impede the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to build up his own, than this transformation of the Lord's consecrated day, into a day of sport. I fear there are some parts of our country, where even taverns are haunted on the Lord's day; where games are played, and horses run over the race-ground. Others, who would be ashamed to be seen in these crowds, and taken up with these sports, are riding out for their pleasure; or politely giving, or accepting, invitations to dinners, or to tea

parties. If such are not down-right infidels, let them ask themselves, Is this keeping *holy* the sabbath-day?

*Thirdly. Speaking our own words*, is an encroachment on the sabbath. After being told that we must not find our own pleasure, it is added, “nor speaking thine own words.” We may talk on the sabbath; but it must be such talk as belongs to a day holy to the Lord:—It must not be *vain*; it must not even be *secular*. Would there not be a strange incongruity in the command, if it strictly forbade labor and recreation, but allowed us to *talk* freely about them both; and to lay out all the business and recreations of the week on the holy sabbath?

Some in quoting this passage, have added another clause, namely, ‘nor thinking thine own thoughts.’ This is not expressed in the text; but the sentiment is just, and it is easily gathered from what is expressed. Thoughts about the business or pleasures of the week, do, when they are indulged, pollute the sabbath in His view, from whom no thought can be withholden.

2. From this important portion of scripture, we not only learn what we must *not* do; but also what we *must* do, if we would keep the sabbath in such a manner, as to please the Lord of the sabbath. *First*. We must call the sabbath a *delight*. The sabbath, a day sequestered from business, recreations, and worldly discourse; and consecrated to the worship of God, and spiritual improvement, is a striking emblem of heaven. The Lord requires that we love this day, considered as a *holy* day;—that we anticipate it with desire, and welcome it when it arrives; and that we drop our secular business, and go into, and continue in, its holy services with great delight. Surely, they who love God, and are preparing for the holy of holies, will call the sabbath a delight. *Secondly*. We are here required to call “the holy of the Lord *honorable*.” The primitive Christians called the Lord’s day, “The day of heaven,” and “The

queen of days." The sabbath is a standing memorial, that Jehovah is our Creator and our Redeemer. It becomes us not to be ashamed of the day which our Creator has sanctified and blessed; and which, in distinction from all other days, he calls *his own*. If it be a disgrace for us, to own ourselves to be his dependant offspring, and to be in need of his salvation, then we may well be ashamed of his day. We are ashamed of it, and of its Author, if we are ashamed to keep it, even in the strictest sense, *holy to the Lord*.

We are not only to call, or esteem, the holy of the Lord honorable, but we are so to spend it as to "honor Him." The sabbath is not truly sanctified by ever so strict an observance of it, if the glory of God is not regarded. The religion of the Bible requires that the ultimate end should always be to glorify God.

*Lastly.* From the portion of inspired truth before us we learn, that God has promised great good to those who truly sanctify his sabbaths. "I will cause thee, (i. e. on condition of delighting in the sabbath and turning away from every encroachment upon it,) to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." A regard to the sabbath is supposed to be connected with obedience to the other commands of God. And it is most certain, that such a regard to the sabbath, as is described by the prophet, will be attended with correspondent obedience to other divine requirements. And this is also certain, that a nation or people to whom God has made known his holy sabbath, cannot expect his blessing, if they lightly esteem and disregard it.

#### ISA. lxvi. 23.

*And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.*

This is a prediction of a period when the whole family of man, which is here denominated *all flesh*, shall become agreed in (what of all other things is the most important) their *religion* :

1. In the *God* whom they shall worship : “ All flesh shall come to worship before *me*, saith the LORD.” To be agreed in the worship of Baal, or any other idol god, would constitute an unlovely bond of union : but to be agreed in the worship of JEHOVAH, the true God, must be a most desirable agreement.

2. They will be agreed not only in the object, but also in the *times* of their worship : for “ from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another,” they will come to worship before the Lord. This implies the existence of public and stated worship at the period foretold. The sabbath spoken of is doubtless that which was instituted at the beginning of time, and which was incorporated in the moral law ; while the *new moons* (this is Old Testament language for New Testament worship) may intend all the other seasons of holy convocation, whether monthly or not, which should be observed by the church under the gospel dispensation.

3. When mankind shall agree in the object of their worship, and the times for its performance, they will also be agreed as to their *constancy* in the observance of those times. Then “ from one new moon to another, and *from one sabbath to another*, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” This implies something more than an occasional attendance on the worship of the sanctuary. At the present period it is but a minority in Christian countries, and perhaps in the church itself, who make a point of appearing in the house of the Lord every sabbath-day ; but in the time which is here foretold it will be entirely common. This will be a comely sight indeed, when *all flesh* shall

come to worship before the Lord *from one sabbath to another* through the whole year.

As the religion of the Bible spreads in the world, this prediction comes nearer to a complete fulfilment. Where Christian missionaries prove successful in turning heathen nations from idolatry to the worship of the true God, the Christian sabbath is immediately recognized by their converts as a holy day. We may therefore conclude that when the idols shall be utterly abolished, "and the Lord shall be king over all the earth," His supremacy will be acknowledged by a universal sanctification of that day of the week which he challenges as his own. A union of all the families of the earth in a holy observance of that day which is a weekly memorial of the great work of creation, and of the still greater work of redemption, will present a brighter picture than earth has ever yet seen. Then will swords be beaten into plough-shares and spears into pruning hooks. The prospect of such a delightful period, is enough to support and animate those friends of God and man, who live in these days when there is so much desecration of holy time, and so much destruction of human life by the sword of war.

JER. xvii. 19—27.

*Thus saith the Lord unto me ; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem ; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates : Thus saith the Lord ; take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem ; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made*

*their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow the sabbath-day, to do no work therein ; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath-day ; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.*

Although this passage is long, I did not know how to omit any of it, as it is so solemn, and so suited to our own case. It is worthy of notice,

1. That the prophet was to deliver his message to the kings of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the metropolis ; and to all the people of the land. The Lord has a right to reprove *kings* and *rulers*, and the *polished inhabitants of cities*, as well as the common people. The messengers of the Lord of hosts need not be afraid to lift up their warning voice, to reprove wickedness in high places. If the ruler sin against the Lord, he ought to know it. He ought to know that *he* is not above DIVINE AUTHORITY. The command, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy," is binding on him, as much as on any other. The exalted station, even of a monarch, gives him no liberty to

disregard one of the commands of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. All classes, high and low, rich and poor, are concerned to know what the *Lord* hath spoken.

2. It is worthy to be noted, that the prophet Jeremiah was called to deliver this message in a time of general corruption; a time of heavy judgments, and a time when the kingdom of Judah was tottering to fall. And even now he had authority from God, to promise them the removal of these judgments, and the restoration of great national prosperity, on condition of their amending their ways and their doings; and particularly as it respected the sanctification of the sabbath-day. On the other hand, they were advertised, that if they would not hearken unto the Lord, to hallow the sabbath-day,—he would kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, which should devour her palaces, and should not be quenched. Let us pause, and think—Does not the same God, who pronounced this threatening, still live, and reign? And has he become reconciled to a profanation of his holy sabbath? Or has he become weak, and unable to vindicate his insulted authority?

3. We notice, that the particular breach of the sabbath complained of, and cautioned against in this passage, is *bearing burdens* into, and out of the gates of Jerusalem; and into, and out of their own doors. *This* is the only breach of the sabbath here particularized, and it is four times repeated in this one passage. The practice of the people of our land, will furnish a reason for the need there was of such *explicit* and *reiterated* mention of carrying burdens on the sabbath, in that time of great declension. It is probable, that going to and from market, and pursuing other journeys, had become a much more common, open, and allowed breach of the sabbath, than working in the field. 'This is most evidently the case in our country, in this time of declension. There are many men at the present day, who, when at home, do not think of yoking their oxen,

or harnessing their horses, to go into the field to labor; who, when they are on journeys, even of business or pleasure, think of nothing else but doing it, from sabbath to sabbath. It is a proof that religion is at a low ebb, when men's consciences will allow them to make such distinctions as these. The fourth commandment, which forbids *any work* on the sabbath, most evidently forbids carrying merchandize, or any thing of the kind. But if that is not explicit enough, how can this pointed passage in the prophet be gotten over? And yet men, who read this passage, as a part of the revealed will of God, will not give up this abominable practice. How are the children of God pained, from sabbath to sabbath, to see the great roads thronged with wagons loaded with the produce which a bountiful Providence has caused our fields to yield to us, going to the market towns; or groaning under hogsheads of rum and other merchandize, transported thence into the country! Is not this *bearing burdens* on the sabbath-day? And yet, what a general practice it has become—so general, that the number who disapprove of it, feel (as it respects many parts of the country,) insufficient to check it, though they have the statute laws, as well as the laws of God, on their side. And those, who pass along on the road in their chaises and coaches, on the sabbath, are none the less guilty of profaning the day, on account of their being destitute of cumbersome loads. If the inhabitants of this land will be inattentive to so plain a case; if, like the Jews, they will not obey, neither incline their ear, but make their necks stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction, they must feel the weight of Jehovah's avenging arm. "O that they were wise; that they understood this!"

LAM. i. 7.

——— *The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.*



From this short passage we learn, that it is the *adversaries* of Zion, who *mock* at her *sabbaths*. Infidels make very light of a holy day. They would destroy the remembrance of it, if it were in their power. A few years ago an experiment of it was made in France. The infidels, who managed the revolution, publicly denounced, not only the Christian religion, but the Divine existence. They mocked at the sabbath, and to throw it into oblivion, they divided the month into *decades*, or ten-day weeks, instead of seven-day weeks. It cannot be expected of those who hate God and the Bible, that they should call the holy day of the Lord honorable. But if this day is the Lord's, as his word declares, it must be a high contempt of Him to disregard it. It must be blasphemy to mock at it. "Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong."

## EZEK. XX. 13.

——— *And my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them.*

From this passage we learn,

1. That there is such a thing as an *aggravated profanation* of the sabbath-day. It may not only be polluted, but *greatly* polluted. The sabbath is polluted by every thing which the command, either expressly or impliedly, forbids; whether it be in works, words, or thoughts. Those who set themselves most conscientiously to sanctify the day can always discover, at the close of it, that they have sinfully deviated from the rule; and such imperfections are bewailed before God. But something more than this common imperfection is meant, when it is said, "My sabbaths they *greatly* polluted." A wilful disregard of the sabbath, by performing common labor, transacting worldly business, talking unrestrainedly on topics not relating to holy things; or

devoting the sacred hours to merriment and pastime:—they who do these, and such like things, *greatly* pollute the sabbaths of the Lord. A *nation* may be said greatly to pollute the sabbaths, when it is not here and there a solitary individual who practises these things; but when such things have become common through the great mass of the people; and especially when it is but little thought of, that all this is wrong, or worthy of being reprov'd, or even mentioned. How far this charge of greatly polluting the sabbaths of the Lord our God, can be substantiated against us, as persons, as families, and as a community, it becomes us all to examine.

2. This passage teaches us, that when the sabbaths are greatly polluted, the Lord is greatly displeased. “Then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them.” When the Most High sees that the day, which he has sanctified and blessed, and strictly and repeatedly enjoined it upon us to keep holy to him, is wholly disregarded, and spent in a way altogether different from what he has commanded, his holy indignation is stirred up. It is a wonder that he bears so long with such heaven-daring rebels. If mercy did not dwell with justice, his fury would have been poured out ere this time, and we should have been utterly consumed.

We have more concerning the sabbath in the same chapter, verses 16th and 24th.

*Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths, for their hearts went after their idols. Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.*

We notice, 1. That those who pollute the sabbath, are apt to be guilty of other breaches of the law of God. They

are apt to despise the holy rules, which the Judge of all the earth has given us, by which to regulate our lives; this they manifest by not walking in his statutes in other respects, as well as by a contempt of holy time.

2. We notice in the passage before us, that *idolatry* seems to be at the foundation of a profanation of the Lord's day.—“But polluted my sabbaths: *for* their heart went after their idols.” They who are willing to obey the *first*, *second* and *third* commandments, will most certainly be subject to the *fourth*. They who are willing there should be a *holy God*, are willing there should be a *holy day*. But they, whose hearts go after their idols, are not pleased with a day separated from other days to the service of the true God. They who serve mammon, and they who are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,” will be disgusted with the sabbath; and will be continually inclined to turn it out of its proper channel into one more congenial to their idol-worship.

3. It is worthy of remark, that if the sanctification of the sabbath were a matter of small consequence, it would not be so repeatedly mentioned by the God of Israel, (who is a Being that never trifles,) as a reason why he sent destructive evils upon his covenant people. In such connexion, it is three times repeated in this one chapter. The repeated and particular mention which is made of their polluting the sabbaths, while many other sins were not thus particularized, shows that this was not a sin of small magnitude in the sight of God; and also, that it was a sin of which they had been in no small degree guilty. It was a great sin, and greatly multiplied. It is a sin, which no doubt greatly endangers the peace and prosperity of that people where it is multiplied;—and where, though the sin is so open and common that it testifieth to their face; yet, when they are called upon to return unto the Lord, they say, “Wherein shall we return?”

## EZEK. xxii. 8.

*Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.*

1. We remark, that profaning the sabbath is very naturally connected with despising *all the holy things* of the Lord. The sacrifices, the sanctuary, the priesthood, and all those things set apart to the immediate service of God, were his holy things. Religious worship, in all its various branches, is a holy thing. Now, it is perfectly natural, that they who despise holy things, should despise a holy day. And as soon as you have learned that it is the character of a man, to tread under foot the holy sabbath, you expect nothing else but to see him tread under foot every thing which is sacred.

2. By comparing this passage with its context we are led to remark, that a profanation of the sabbath is placed in the midst of a black catalogue of crimes; and must therefore appear in God's account a heinous sin. Jeremiah prophesied just before the destruction of the holy city by the Babylonians. In his message to the people, he pointed out to them the sins which would ruin them, if they did not repent and reform: and among other things, we have already seen that he warned them, that if they did not hearken unto the Lord, to *hallow the sabbath-day*, he would kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, which should devour her palaces, and should not be quenched. It is well known, that the people did not hearken to the voice of the Lord by his prophet;—and that the fire which was threatened was actually kindled, and was not quenched until the city and the temple were laid in ashes. In view of the certainty of this awful destruction, the Lord, by the prophet Ezekiel, vindicated his conduct in bringing this evil upon the city which was called by his name. “Yea,” said the Lord to his prophet, “thou shalt show her all her abominations.” Then follows

a catalogue of *abominations*. In the midst of such abominations, as shedding blood, making idols, setting light by father and mother, dealing by oppression with the stranger, vexing the fatherless and widow, carrying tales to shed blood, and committing lewdness; we find this—"Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast *profaned my sabbaths*." If a profanation of the sabbath is with propriety put into such a catalogue of abominations, then surely, sabbath-breakers need be ashamed of their company. And let them remember, if the fire which is kindled in our land, should not be quenched until the distress of the nation shall become extreme, that *they*, as well as *murderers*, and *extortioners*, and the *disobedient to parents*, and the *tale bearers*, and the *adulterers*, and *drunkards*, have kindled this fire, and must be accountable for the consequences. Further on in the chapter it is said, "They have made her many widows in the midst thereof." This was the effect of war, (as it always is;) but wicked men of their own nation were said to make these many widows, because their sins had provoked the Lord of hosts to send a desolating war upon them.

The 26th verse of the same chapter is worthy of one or two remarks.

*Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.*

1. It may be remarked, that this text exhibits an additional trait in the character of that degenerate age, when the city and temple were, by the judgment of God, devoted to the flames; it is this; that the *priests*, the ministers of religion, whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth they should seek the law, as being the messengers of the Lord of hosts; even the *priests* hid their eyes from the sab-

baths of the Lord: *they* did not regard them; *they* did not reverence them. They conducted as though they did not see the sabbaths when they arrived. They *hid their eyes* from them. Surely religion must have been at a low ebb, when its very ministers did not themselves regard that day which God had appropriated to religious worship and instruction. When those who sustain the office of messengers of the Lord of hosts; who are appointed to plead his cause with their fellow men, and to show them that it is not a vain thing to serve God; when *these* profane the sabbath by journeying, by finding their own pleasure, by speaking their own words, and especially, when they appear light and vain on this holy day; then the Lord of the sabbath is greatly profaned among the people where they minister. "Brethren, pray for us," who minister in holy things, that we may not be suffered to be profaners of the holy sabbath.

2. From this passage we may learn what the character of those ministers will be, considered as *preachers*, who hide their eyes from the Lord's sabbaths; or are very lax in their observance of them: "They will put no difference between the holy and profane; neither will they show difference between the unclean and the clean." This may characterize both their *preaching* and their *discipline*. In their preaching there is nothing clear and distinguishing. They do not show any *real difference* between a sinner and a saint. Their hearers are rocked to sleep by their smooth discourses; and *Christless christians* (if the phrase may be indulged) are not reminded of the sandy foundation on which they are built. Discipline is laid asleep. This gospel fan is not used to purge the floor of Christ. All this is implied in their putting no difference between the holy and profane; between the unclean and the clean. And this is ascribed to those priests, or teachers in the church, who have hid their eyes from the holy sabbaths. If teachers do not distinguish between holy and common time, a thing

so plainly done by the word of God, it is not surprising that in other things they put no difference between the holy and profane. In the 44th chapter of this prophecy, teachers in the *gospel* church, and especially in its *millennial* state, are described as teaching the Lord's people the difference between the holy and profane, and causing them to discern between the unclean and the clean. It is also added, "And they shall *hallow my sabbaths*."

There is but one more passage in the Old Testament, on which I shall at present remark: It is

AMOS viii. 5, 8.

*Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit.—Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein?*

1. It is worthy of notice, that in the days of the prophet Amos it was a given point, that the command, enjoining the sanctification of the sabbath, did peremptorily prohibit the selling of wheat, or other grain, or carrying on any traffic on the sabbath; else why did they wish the sabbath to be gone, that they might set forth wheat? Are there not some at the present day, who do not wait for the sabbath to be gone, before they enter on their traffic?

2. In the passage before us we notice, that a greediness for gain will make the sabbath seem *tedious* to those who are thereby prevented from attending to their worldly business. The day seems long to such:—they say, *When will it be gone?* They are out of their element. Their treasure is laid up on the earth, and their heart is there also. And no day is pleasant to them, in which they cannot be increasing their earthly treasure. What a dreadful symptom must this be of their unpreparedness for the kingdom of heaven! They to whom *one* holy day in the week is tire-

some, must be very far-from being prepared for an *eternal sabbath*.

3. Another thing is worthy of remark in this passage, namely, That they, who, from an eager desire after the world, can hardly wait for the sabbath to be gone, before they engage in buying and selling, are in danger of seeking gain by fraudulent means. In the same sentence, in which they are complained of for wishing the sabbath to be gone that they might sell wheat, they are also charged with falsifying the balances by deceit; making the ephah (the measure by which they sold) small, and the shekel (the weight of the money received in payment) great. They also sold the *refuse* of the wheat. It is not strange, if men who allowedly *rob God*, should be guilty of defrauding their fellow men. At least, it is certain, that it is not from uprightness of heart they are prevented from doing it. Men may for a pretence make long prayers, and have a shew of much regard to the sabbath, and yet be dishonest men; but they, who from *principle* keep the sabbath holy to the Lord, may be depended upon as men possessing an honest disposition towards their fellow men. True piety is never connected with an immoral life. The first and great command enjoins supreme love to God; the second is like it, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The man, who has no regard to the first of these commands, has no true regard to the second.

4. It is to our point to remark, that their wicked works, among which a dislike to the sabbath is mentioned, were about to bring dreadful judgments on the nation. "Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein?" Our land is trembling, and very many wear the badges of mourning. "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still!"



## THIRD DISCOURSE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures.————

LET us now search the New Testament scriptures, that we may see what *they* testify of the weekly sabbath. Some have thought, the New Testament has done away the sabbath; so that now one day is no more holy than another. Let us candidly hear its testimony, and then judge.

The first three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, do in many instances record the same things. I shall examine their record concerning the sabbath, as nearly as I can, according to the order of time, instead of being governed by the order in which the records are placed in the Bible. In pursuance of this method, the first passage which presents itself is,

LUKE iv. 16.

*And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.*

On this passage we are led to remark,

1. There was a *sabbath-day* in the time of Christ.
2. That it was common at that time to have meetings on the sabbath, for religious purposes; especially for getting instruction out of the scriptures.
3. We also learn from this portion of scripture, that *Christ* made a *stated practice* of attending these religious meetings on the sabbath-day. We are not only informed,

that he went into the synagogue (or meeting house) on a certain sabbath-day; but that it was his *custom* so to do. [See also Luke xiii. 10. Mark i. 21, and vi. 2.] From this scripture, and from the other parts of the history of our Lord, we have reason to conclude, that from his early childhood it was his custom to attend upon the worship and instruction of the synagogue *every sabbath-day*. So far, we have evidence in favor of a strict and constant sanctification of the holy sabbath by our blessed Lord. A constant attendance on public worship, is one of the ways that the people of God manifest their regard to the sabbath. If we would make Jesus Christ our pattern, (and we cannot have a better,) we must attend public worship, not once a month; or now and then; but it must be our *custom* to attend from sabbath to sabbath. Let me add, though it must be our custom to attend; yet we must not attend from custom, but from regard to God.

The next passage in order, which relates to the subject before us, is concerning the disciples of Christ plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day. This is recorded,

MATT. xii. 1—8.

*At that time Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day. But he said unto them, have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place is one*

*greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.*

Let it be noted, 1. That the complaint brought against the disciples was not for theft; because it was written, Deut. xxiii. 25, "When thou comest into the standing-corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand: but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing-corn." The complaint was for breach of the sabbath, for doing "that which was not lawful to do upon the *sabbath-day*."

2. Let it be noted, that Jesus, in clearing his disciples from the charge of doing that which was not lawful to be done on the sabbath-day, never pretended that the command, enjoining the sanctification of the sabbath, was repealed or altered. If Jesus had considered this commandment as no longer binding, it would have been perfectly in point to have said so. But he answered the accusers, *first*, by referring them to the case of David, who in a time of extreme urgency satisfied his hunger with the shew-bread, which God had separated to the use of the priests alone. Christ justified the conduct of David in this extreme case, without designing to find the least fault with the law, which prohibited any but the priests from eating the shew-bread. *Secondly*. Christ answered these accusers by saying, "have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" i. e. the priests and Levites were obliged to perform considerable labor in killing the sacrifices which were to be offered on the sabbath-days: and yet, as these sacrifices were divinely appointed, the labor must be performed. It is called *profaning* the sabbath, not because it was wrong, but because it was such kind of labor as was performed on other days, and

would have profaned the sabbath, if it had not been either enjoined, or necessary. *Thirdly.* Christ answered those who accused his disciples of profaning the sabbath, because that on this day they rubbed out a few ears of corn to satisfy their hunger, by referring to Hos. vi. 6; where the Lord says, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice." God had appointed sacrifices, but he hated robbery for burnt offerings; even if it was robbing the poor of those *alms*, which they needed to sustain life. He had appointed the sanctification of the sabbath, but he allowed us out of this day a sufficiency of time to take our stated meals.

Let us now for a moment examine into this alleged breach of the sabbath. The disciples were hungry. They had a right by the divine law, as honesty was respected, to gather a few heads of wheat or barley to satisfy hunger. They did not probably consume so much time, in the gathering, rubbing out, and eating, this dry meal, as is consumed in merely eating a common meal, after it is all placed upon the table. Surely, if the Pharisees had not been disposed to find fault with what was done by Christ and his followers, they would not have thought of grounding an accusation on so small a thing. Indeed this accusation is good proof, that the disciples of Jesus were exemplary in their observance of the sabbath, else the Pharisees, who continually watched for their halting, would have been able to have produced some greater allegation.

Christ told these accusing Pharisees, that he was Lord even of the sabbath-day. As the great Author of the commandment, he was able to tell what he meant by *keeping holy* the sabbath; and to declare what things might be done, and we be guiltless of polluting the day. As Lord of the sabbath, his honor was concerned to guard it against every unhallowed touch.

Mark and Luke both give us an account of the Pharisees accusing the disciples of profaning the sabbath, because they

plucked the ears of corn. Mark, in his account of it, relates one thing which our Savior said in his answer to the Pharisees, which is omitted by Matthew. It is contained in the 2d chapter of his Gospel, 27th verse; *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.*

Here let us observe, 1st. That the Lord of the sabbath tells us that there was *a sabbath made*. We have heretofore seen *when* the sabbath was made, even as soon as the heavens and earth and all their host were finished. We have also seen, that the sabbath which was then made was renewedly enjoined by one of the ten commandments. We have also seen, by recurring to a number of inspired records, what things were forbidden to be done on that day, and how the hours must be spent to please God. Now this very sabbath, instituted by the Creator, written with his own finger on one of the tables of stone, and guarded by many promises and threatenings, was *the sabbath* which our Savior must have meant.

2ndly. We observe, that this sabbath was made *for man*;—not only for man to obey; but it was also made for the benefit of man. What is the inference from this? Is this the inference, ‘Then man may use the sabbath as he pleases?’ As well might it be inferred, that because Christ died for sinners, to do them an infinite favor, therefore they may treat him as they please. If sinners would have the death of Christ prove a blessing to them, they must receive him as he is freely offered to them in the gospel. So, if the children of men would have that sabbath, which was made for them, prove a real benefit to them, they must keep it according to the commandment; they must make it a *holy* and not a *common* day. Yet it was natural to infer, since the sabbath was made for man, and was not made a fasting day, that man might satisfy his hunger in such a way as

the disciples did, without being considered as treading under foot "the holy of the Lord."

The great latitude, which some have taken from this declaration of our Savior, is very unreasonable. The Savior evidently recognized the command which obliges us to hallow the sabbath-day; nor did he say any thing to encourage a loose explication of the command. When he said, that "man was not made for the sabbath," he did not mean to throw the reins on our necks, and tell us that we were made to live unto ourselves, and do with the sabbath as we pleased. We were made to glorify God. This is our duty, and in doing this, we shall find the favor of God, which is life. God is glorified by a conscientious observance of his holy day; and not only so, but those, who thus observe it, are blessed in so doing, and are greatly furthered in their way to glory.

MARK iii. 1—6.

*And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand: and they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man with the withered hand, stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*

The same matter is narrated, Matt. xii. 9—13, and Luke vi. 6—11.

Before I proceed to make any comment on this portion of scripture, I shall introduce two others from the Gospel of Luke, which are very similar to this ; so that the same remarks will be naturally suggested by them all. The first is, chapter xiii. 10—17.

*And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her : and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work : in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering ? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day ? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed : and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.*

The other is, chapter xiv. 1—6.

*And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful*

*to heal on the sabbath-day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day? And they could not answer him again to these things.*

From these scriptures we learn, 1. That there are certain works of *necessity* and *mercy*, which may be done upon the sabbath-day. The manner in which Christ speaks of the general practice, of loosing the ox or the ass from the stall to lead him away to watering on the sabbath-day, implies, that he does not disapprove of the practice, as being inconsistent with a holy observance of the day. Nothing is to be done on the sabbath, for the sake of getting along with our worldly business;—for the sake of *accumulating* property. In this respect, the command is strict, Thou shalt not do *any work*. But this does not forbid us, even on the sabbath-day, to deal out to our cattle the hay and provender, which we have laid up on other days. All the business which can be done before the sabbath, to render us and our beasts comfortable through the day, is to be done; and all which can be left until after the sabbath, is to be left undone. But even, when this direction is followed, some things of a secular nature, such as foddering and watering our cattle, and dressing food for ourselves, must be done on the sabbath itself.

The Lord of the sabbath allowed of loosing the ox and the ass from the stall, to lead them away to watering on this day; but did he allow of loosing them from the stall, to drive them in droves to the market; or to draw those burdens, which, in his word, he had expressly forbidden to be borne on the sabbath-day? Who would think of inferring the latter from the former?

The Divine Teacher also allowed of works of *mercy*; and



these had always been allowed; for he did not abate the sanctity of the sabbath. If a beast had fallen into a pit, or was otherwise in distressed circumstances, he evidently considered it lawful to afford it relief on his holy day. He considered *healing the sick*, as a thing not inconsistent with the sanctification of the day. Christ himself healed without any labor; yet I think we may learn from what he did, and from what he said on the subject, that it is lawful for *physicians* to minister healing medicines to the sick on the Lord's day. Yet I cannot think that Christ will approve of making the sabbath the particular day of resorting to the physician: nor do I think he is pleased to have physicians make this, more particularly than other days, the day of visiting their patients. He searcheth the reins and hearts, and knoweth who among this profession of men are desirous of resting from their labors, to devote the day to the exercises of religion.\*

Other works of mercy, such as affording relief to those who are in suffering circumstances, are consistent with keeping the day holy to the Lord. If one of you on a Lord's day morning, just ready to go to the house of God to attend on his worship, should be informed, that a family at the distance of several miles, was perishing with hunger, it would be no breach of the sabbath, to turn your attention to them, though for this time your seat in the house of God should thereby become empty. *Mercy*, in such an instance, would be more pleasing to God than *sacrifice*. Such a case would serve to explain the question put to the scribes and Pharisees, "Is it lawful on the sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?"

2. From the passages of scripture now before us, we

\* Physicians are bound by the law of the sabbath, (as it stands in the word of God,) to do all they can towards preparing their medicines beforehand; so that they may have as little diversion as possible from the appropriate duties of the holy day.

learn, that men may even be rigid in the *external* observance of the sabbath, and yet have no true piety. They who keep it as a day consecrated to the honor and worship of the Most High, and *delight* in it as such, are pious; they are meetening for the inheritance of the saints in light: but no degree of *external* strictness ought to be considered as decisive proof that we love God. Our blessed Lord plainly told the Pharisees, that the love of God was not in them; and yet from the scripture before us, we find these very Pharisees found much fault with him, because he was no stricter in his observance of the sabbath. They were whitened sepulchres. Their religion was all outside. They had no principle of supreme love to God; and yet were ready to condemn Immanuel, God himself, because he was no more holy. Some have considered a strict regard to the external observance of the sabbath as a proof of hypocrisy; but this is wrong: God requires strictness. Nehemiah, a man greatly approved of God, was remarkably strict in observing the sabbath, and in requiring others to do it. Christ did not find fault with the Pharisees for their strictness, even in paying tithes of mint, anise, and cummin; but for omitting the weightier matters of religion. I do not know that he found fault with them for their external strictness in observing the sabbath, except in those instances in which they condemned him as a profaner of the sabbath. And in these instances he showed them that their own allowed practice in other cases, such as relieving animals in distress, or leading their creatures to watering, would justify him, and make it appear, that he was in reality as strict as they were. But all their strictness was nothing pleasing to the holy Jesus; “he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.” He looked into their hearts, and there saw none of the love of God;—he saw no godly sorrow for sin; no faith in the divine promises; nor any of that meek, humble, sweet, benevolent

temper, which is essential to an amiable character. If these are wanting, all is wanting. If, on the Lord's day, we do no work, perform no journey, read no books but such as are on the subject of religion, have no discourse except such as is serious, and are still destitute of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, let us not indulge a thought that we are *Christians*.

## MATTH. XXIV. 20.

*But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day.*

In this passage Christ seems to put honor on the sabbath-day. Fleeing from an invading foe might be lawful on the sabbath; but still it would be a great impediment to a spiritual enjoyment of its sacred hours; therefore it was suitable to pray, that such an event might, by the disposals of Providence, be prevented from occurring on that holy day. From this perhaps we may learn, that it manifests want of regard to the sabbath to make choice of that as the day of making an attack on our enemy; and we ought to pray, that they may be prevented from taking that day to attack us. It is not only proper to deprecate conflagrations, inundations, and such unforeseen calamities; but also to pray, if God sees it necessary to chastise us by them, that in mercy he would not send them on the sabbath-day, as they would tend to divert our attention from its appropriate and very important duties. The sabbath is the most important day of the week. So the scriptures consider it. The other days of the week are more immediately devoted to prepare to live here; but the sabbath is more peculiarly devoted to prepare to live in heaven. We ought therefore to prefer to be diverted from the secular pursuits of one of the working days, rather than to be diverted from the religious duties of the Lord's day.

## LUKE xxiii. 55, 56.

*And the women also which came from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid, and they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.*

1. It is worthy of observation, that these women who came from Galilee, from all the account which we have of them, were among the choicest disciples which Jesus had. From the eighth chapter of this Gospel we learn, that they ministered to him of their substance. They followed him to the cross, and to the sepulchre. They prepared spices and ointments to perfume his dead body; and on the first day of the week, they came early to perform what they supposed would be the last kind office to him whom they loved. These women had all of them sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his word. They had deeply drunk of his spirit. By following him from place to place, they had opportunity to become acquainted with his *practice*, as well as with his doctrine.

2. It is worthy of observation, that these holy women rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment. It is not said, they rested according to the tradition of the elders, the sentiment of the Pharisees, or the superstition of the Jews; but that they rested according to *the commandment*. From this we may safely conclude, that Jesus Christ taught his followers, both by precept and example, to keep the sabbath-day as a *holy rest*.

3. It is worthy to be observed, what these Christian women rested from on the sabbath: they rested from anointing the body of Jesus. This was the work which they were preparing to do, when the sabbath arrived; and it was a work which their hearts were much set upon, as appears by the sequel; and yet they rested even from this work of love on

the sabbath, according to the commandment.\* Jesus Christ who being dead, yet lived in spirit, was no doubt more pleased to see these friends of his, resting on the sabbath, *according to the commandment*, than to have seen them anointing his body with the most costly ointments; else he would not have influenced the Evangelist to use such words in making a record of it. From this case we may learn, that the sabbath may be profaned by unnecessary work about the *dead*; such as digging graves, making coffins, or preparing mourning apparel. If a person dying on Friday, is to be buried on the sabbath, it would be a profanation of the day, to defer preparing the coffin and grave until the sabbath, because they could then be seasonably prepared. To do *unnecessary* work relating to the dead, is only to make this a *cover* for the profanation of holy time. Let me ask, Would it be any more consistent with the fourth commandment, to go into the burying-ground, to set up grave stones on the sabbath-day, than to transact any secular business? It may often be necessary to dig a grave on this holy day, but it can never be necessary to set up grave stones: And when it is known to be no more necessary to do the one, than the other, then they are equally forbidden.

4. It may be worth noticing *when* this sabbath was, on which these Christian women rested according to the commandment. It was after Christ came into the world. It was after he had gone through with his public ministry, and expired on the cross. Even *then*, his most devoted friends kept the sabbath, according to the commandment. If the sabbath out-lived the life of Christ upon earth, then all which is drawn from the example of Christ, or of his disciples, while he was yet with them, to do away the obligation of sanctifying the sabbath, is of no force.

\* Query. Would not such women have also rested from the work of a dairy on the sabbath, with a belief that such resting was according to the commandment?

In the Gospel of John, we have two other instances of miracles of healing, performed by Christ on the sabbath. Of one we have the account in the fifth, and of the other in the ninth chapter. In both these cases we find the Jews objecting against the piety of Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath-day. As we have already attended to this objection, we shall not examine both these cases distinctly. But there is something in the reply which our Savior made to them, when they found fault with his healing the impotent man, which deserves some particular attention.

JOHN v. 16, 17.

*And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

It may be said, Does not our Savior, in this answer to the Jews, acknowledge that he worked on the sabbath-day, and that he had ever made a practice of doing it? If then he is to be our pattern, may we not work on the sabbath, and be blameless?

If any one has been led by this passage to such a conclusion, let him devote only a moment or two to a candid re-examination of it, and he will see, that no such conclusion ought to have been drawn from it.

In this passage we notice, That Jesus brings into view the example of his Father, to support him in working on the sabbath-day; "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*" But in the fourth commandment, and at the first institution of the sabbath, *God's resting* from his work on the sabbath, is proposed as *our example* for resting from our work on that day. And let it ever be kept in mind, that divine truth does not stand opposed to divine truth. When the scripture informs us, that on the seventh day God rested from his

work, we are not to obtain the idea, that he rested from all kind of work and became inactive during the sabbath. He rested from the work of creation ; but from the work of providence he could not rest a moment, without creation's returning to its primitive nothing. All things are constantly upheld by the word of his power, and directed by his wisdom. It was in this sense, that Christ declared that his Father had worked hitherto. In the same sense, He, as being one with the Father, continually worked and now works. His providential care of his kingdom, and of the works of his hands went on during the sabbath as much as on any other day. And he meant they should consider his preserving, or restoring the health of men, as a part of that providential work, which it became him, as God over all, to carry on without regard to the distinction of days. Jesus was the *Son of man*, as well as the *Son of God*. As a man he kept the sabbath-day holy, according to the commandment. He is called the carpenter. It is altogether probable that while he lived with his father Joseph, he pursued this occupation with him. Now let me ask, is there a single hearer, who entertains an idea, that Jesus, as a carpenter, worked on the sabbath-day? Was it such work that he meant when he said, "And *I* work." If he had made a practice of pursuing such work on the sabbath-day, it must have been known ; and it would certainly have been objected against him, instead of their objecting against him, that he removed a disease of thirty and eight years standing, merely by a word's speaking.

#### ACTS i. 12.

*Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.*

1. It may be proper to ascertain the distance of mount Olivet from Jerusalem. By turning your eye to Zechariah

xiv. 3, you will see that it is *contiguous* to Jerusalem: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." By comparing the passage which is now under consideration with Luke xxiv. 50, we learn that Bethany was on mount Olivet: and from John. xi. 18, we learn that Bethany was about fifteen furlongs off from Jerusalem. Fifteen furlongs are a little less than two miles. It was not therefore to exceed two miles from mount Olivet to Jerusalem.

2. It may be proper to inquire why this distance is expressed by *a sabbath-day's journey*. Let it be remembered, that the Holy Spirit had a reason for directing the writer to this *particular mode* of expression in telling the distance from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem. By this we are taught, that "a sabbath-day's journey" is not more than two miles. And this is as much as to tell us, that it is no day to pursue journeys on secular business: for those who are pursuing such journeys would not think of moving forward, for the sake of getting two miles on their way. It is probable that in the land of Israel, thickly inhabited as that country was, the extremes of a congregation, meeting at the same synagogue, were not more than two miles from the centre; from which circumstance it might become usual to term this distance "a sabbath-day's journey." If circumstances are such as to render it necessary to enlarge the limits of a congregation, then it will take more furlongs to make a sabbath-day's journey. In fine, a sabbath-day's journey, according to the true spirit of it, is to each one of us, the same as the distance from his own house to the house of God.

But pursuing journeys of business or of pleasure, and that without restraint, not only pollutes the sabbath, but is among the things which in our land *greatly* pollute it. It would appear worse than laboring in the field, if it were not sanctioned by the practice of so many. It is as much *our work*



as labor in the field. The traveller interrupts more people in their sanctification of holy time, and places his bad example before a greater number of observers, than the man who labors in his field. He is the means of preventing the gate-keeper, (if he travels on a turnpike,) from attending on public worship; and sometimes from attending on the private duties of religion. By means of the general practice of travelling, there are seasons of the year, when the sabbath is in many *public houses* nearly *secularized*, and reduced to a level with other days.\* The smith is tempted by the traveller, to help him on his way, by those repairs which

\* I have no doubt but there are many tavern-keepers, who, with their families, feel burthened with this profanation of the sabbath; and long to be freed from such a bustle and hurry of business on this day of rest. The tavern-keeper, who is pleased with it, because it brings money into his coffer, resembles those popish priests who get a great revenue by selling to the people *indulgences to sin*. But perhaps there are some of those who keep houses of entertainment, who think it would not relieve them from their cares, if travellers were to rest from their journeying; as they would still have their share of travellers to provide for during the sabbath. To this difficulty, it may be replied: 1. If these travellers are doing right in resting during the sabbath, it is no sin to provide for them. They are your lawful family, if you keep a public house, and thus are to be considered in the light of *boarders*. God by the law of the sabbath tells them to rest from *their work*, (which is now journeying,) and to put up at your house, where the sabbath has overtaken them; and therefore he tells you to take care of them as a part of your family. 2. It is not near as perplexing to have a steady family to provide for, even if its steadiness lasts but for twenty-four hours, as to have the same number continually coming and going; and you know not what to depend upon. 3. If houses of entertainment are more desirous of a holy resting on the sabbath than of making money, they might, in the case of most travellers, dispense with making any extra preparations, intimating that the bill would be made out accordingly. Good breeding, if no higher principle existed, one would think, would induce travellers to be less particular, that the family might have as little diversion as possible from the appropriate duties of the Lord's day. 4. If travelling on the sabbath were to be considered as unlawful, and so be laid aside, many who now are on the road on the sabbath, would so order their journey as not to be from home on this day. Such a reformation, without diminishing the quantity of travel, would lessen the number of travellers which would be from home over the sabbath.

belong to *his* occupation. And even the farmer living on the great road, is sometimes drawn into a profanation of the sabbath by the solicitation of the teamster who wants his assistance to enable him to rise a difficult hill ; or to extricate him from some other embarrassment. To all the other aggravations of this particular way of profaning holy time, that already suggested is no small one; namely, that it sets an evil example before a great number of people, who are all of them apt enough to profane the sabbath, without being emboldened to do it by the bad example of others.

If to all this it should be replied, 'It is a general practice, and therefore ought to be tolerated;' let me beg you to read Exod. xxiii. 2; "Thou shalt not follow a *multitude* to do evil." The greater the number who are in this practice, and the nearer the custom has become, as it were, a law, the more alarm ought to be excited. When the most evident transgressions of God's law are sanctioned by *general custom*, then may we expect to hear the Holy One of Israel say, "Shall not I visit for these things, and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

3. It is perhaps worthy of remark, that this mention of a sabbath-day's journey was *posterior* to the death and resurrection of our Lord. From this we infer, that even as late as this, the Spirit of inspiration delighted to honor the weekly sabbath, by teaching us that it was not a day in which to pursue our common journeys.

As journeying is, at this day, one of the most common profanations of the sabbath ;—one in which all classes, high and low, rich and poor, (not excepting church communicants) partake ;—and since it is such a profanation of the sabbath as is either justified or extenuated, even by some of those who profess a regard for the day, it may perhaps be useful to dwell longer on this part of our subject, by attempting an answer to some of the most popular objections,

which are made against the ideas which have now been advanced.

The following are some of the objections which are made :\*

1. "When we are on a journey, we are away from our families, and we want very much to get home."

Does your being away from your families give you any more right to transgress an express command of God, than though you were at home with them? If so, when you are from home, you may take the Lord's name in vain and be guiltless; when you are away from your families, you need not keep the sixth, seventh or eighth commandments, but may kill, commit adultery and steal. "But we want to be with our families." It is agreeable to see men love their families, and to manifest it either by keeping at home, or returning home as soon as their business and duty will permit. But let me ask my brethren, whether their families lie upon their hearts with so much weight, that business of great consequence would not detain them one day longer? Is not keeping the commands of God of as much consequence, as worldly business? Brethren, if we love our families, let us be exhorted not to travel on the Lord's day, for the sake of being with them one day sooner. We had better leave them in the care of our heavenly Father, than to displease him for the sake of seeing them the sooner. "Blessed is the man who feareth the Lord, that delighteth *greatly* in his commandments; *his seed* shall be mighty upon the earth." It may in this connexion be urged; "our minds will be upon our journey, whether we pursue it or not; therefore we had as good go on, as lie still and keep thinking of our journey." Why do you not say

\* These objections, with the answers to them, will be found in the Con. Evan. Magazine, Vol. v. First Series. The author, in adopting these into his work, does not feel that he has abused any other writer; or subjected himself to the charge of *plagiarism*.

so about the other commands:—that you had as good openly break them as have any desire that way? If, then, you *covet* any thing which is your neighbor's, you may as well *steal* it. "Resist the devil," is the command, and the promise is, "he will flee from you."

2. "Works of necessity and mercy may be done."

It will be granted, that to heal a broken bone, you may ride a distance even on the Lord's day, to obtain the aid of the surgeon. To relieve a distressed and starving family, whose distressing circumstances have just come to your knowledge, you may take the first moment, though it be the Lord's time, to carry them some relief. Here mercy is to be preferred before sacrifice. In this sense, works of necessity and mercy may be done on the Lord's day. But it is exceedingly wrong to apply this rule to our common journeying. I appeal to husbandmen,—Is not the harvest more pressing than journeying? Yet God himself has said, "In earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest." Is travelling, in its very nature, a work of necessity? then let a man only make this his constant employment, and the fourth commandment becomes wholly inapplicable to him. Is this, then, the true meaning of the command, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy," except you are on a journey?

3. "But we do keep the sabbath-day holy, though we pursue our journey; for we can have as good thoughts on the road, as if we were to suspend our journey."

To this we answer; That having good thoughts does not, of itself, constitute a sanctification of the sabbath. A man may think of God and nothing else all the day, and yet not keep the day holy. There is an external as well as an internal sanctification of the sabbath. If the external be wanting, we do not keep the sabbath holy.—When man was in a state of innocence, his thoughts were all good and holy; yet, even then, he was obliged to sanctify the seventh

day in distinction from the other days of the week. Sanctifying the sabbath must mean, then, something more than having pious thoughts. The children of God are sometimes favored with remarkable nearness to God on week days, while they are pursuing their secular business, while they are laboring in their shops, or in their fields, or while their hands take hold on the distaff; but still this is not keeping sabbath-day. And we should all think they did very wrong, to plead the lawfulness of pursuing these occupations on the sabbath, by saying, that they could have as good thoughts while at work in their houses, shops and fields, as if they were worshipping in the house of the Lord. Let us, my brethren, be ashamed to make such a weak objection as this. If we hold it up to the light, we shall see it to be frivolous. Our having pious meditations on the road, no more makes a sanctification of the sabbath, than it would, if we were to have the same meditations while laboring in our fields. Here I would remark, that though the husbandman has precious thoughts in his field on a week day, yet he would have no reason to expect to be thus favored of God, if he were to go into his field on the Lord's holy day.—So the traveller, who is favored with the most delightful communion with his heavenly Father on Saturday, would have no reason to expect the continuance of this inestimable favor the next day, if he were to pursue his journey. We have no right to seek, nor reason to expect communion with God, out of the ways of his appointment. If we would enjoy his favor, we must, like Enoch and Noah, walk *with* God.

4. "We sometimes fall in among a very wicked people on the sabbath, where they pay no attention to the day, except it be to behave worse than on any other days; in such a case, we think we had better go on our journey, than to stay in such company."

The very reason stated in the objection for proceeding on

your journey, is a powerful reason against it. The command of the Savior, is, "Let your light shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in heaven." Now let me ask, Where in the world do people need the light of your holy example, more than in such a dark place as the objection supposes? And in what do they need your example more, than in the sanctification of the sabbath? If your hearts are full of love to God, and to the souls of men, can you let so fair an opportunity of doing good pass unimproved? The Lord has in his providence cast your lot for one sabbath among those who greatly pollute this holy day. You must stay and reprove them. Good example is the most striking kind of reproof. If they see you lying by from your journey all the sabbath, for no other reason only because it is the *Lord's* time and not *yours*, it cannot fail to arrest their attention, even though you should not speak one word on the duty of observing the day. This would command more attention, and be likely to do more good, than all you could possibly *say* on the duty of observing the commandment, provided you did not observe it yourself. Words cost but little, but there is some expense of time and money in lying by at an inn one whole day. I know one man, who had his attention much called up to the duty of sanctifying the sabbath, by the circumstance of having a traveller put up at his tavern during this holy day. If such examples prove effectual only one time in a thousand, it is worth our while to set them before our fellow sinners continually.

The objectors suppose that the sabbath cannot be enjoyed among these ungodly people so well as on the road: but let me ask such, whether they have made a trial, to see how well they can enjoy this consecrated day in a public house? Perhaps you could obtain a chamber, where you might spend the day in secret duties, if there be no public worship

in the place.\* If the weather be mild, you might in almost any part of the country find, in some neighboring woods or orchard, a place to pray, read and meditate; and this would be a suitable way to fill up this day of heaven. If you have not tried this method of spending the sabbath when on a journey, you ought not to say, that the wickedness of the place makes it necessary that you should proceed on your way. But supposing you can have no retirement at all, (which is hardly a supposable case,) I think you have reason to expect a good sabbath, if you conscientiously refrain from proceeding on your journey, which is now your work. "If thou turn away thy foot from" encroaching upon "the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day," saith Jehovah—"then thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth,"—i. e. I will make thee prosper in spirituals and in temporals—thou shalt have much delight in communion with thy God, and he will bless thy substance. This will prepare us to answer another objection.

5. "It is very expensive to lie by a whole day, when we are on a journey, and are all the while living upon our money."

To this objection we answer, first, That profaning the Lord's day is a poor way to make money or save expenses. "Will a man rob God," to save expense? Is not this the way to bring down his curse on your blessings? Do not you, who believe the weekly sabbath to be a divine institu-

\* If those who make the above objection against lying by on the sabbath, do not cease to proceed on their journey, as soon as they come among a people, who attend public worship; or if they do not stop their travelling at the first house, public or private, where the sabbath appears to be revered, (provided they can have entertainment,) then it is manifest, that the reason which they offer for travelling is not the one which really influences them; but is invented, either to still an accusing conscience, or to stop the mouth of the brother, who is so kind and faithful as to reprove them for disobedience to God's holy commands.

tion, also believe that a nation, which carefully observe the institution, have reason to expect even greater temporal prosperity, than a nation which altogether disregard it, though this disregard gives them one more day in the week for labor? Why then have we any reason to expect to increase our wealth, by taking the *Lord's* time for *our* journey? It is infinitely easy for God so to order his providences, that what we appear to gain, by robbing him of the time which he has reserved to himself, we should lose in some other way, even before we have accomplished our journey.

To the objection now under consideration, I would answer, in the second place; Though it be expensive to lie by when we are out from home, still this is no reason why we should not do it; for it is also expensive to rest from labor when we are at home. A large family will consume several dollars' worth of provisions on the sabbath, and they are earning nothing. Now, why may it not be plead in favor of their being at work in the field, or in the loom; that it is very expensive for so many to be eating and drinking, while they are earning nothing? The same argument, which you use to push you on your journey, you may use to drive your sons into the field, and your daughters to their several domestic employments. It would be trifling to endeavor to make a distinction by saying, "but at a tavern I have to pay out *money* for my sabbath's provision, while I have provision laid up for my family at home." What they eat and drink at home, either cost you money, or would have fetched you money; therefore you may just as well say, "I cannot afford to have my family lie by upon the sabbath; for they are upon expense." This objection against the expense of lying by on the sabbath, appears to be founded almost wholly in covetousness, or that love of the world, which is inconsistent with the love of the Father: and yet this is probably the greatest and



most influential of all the objections. The losing of one day's advance in our journey, together with the bill of expense incurred in the mean time, no doubt, does more towards making people travel on the sabbath, than all other reasons put together. But can they, who seek *first* the kingdom of God—can they, who henceforth live not unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them—can they, whose treasure is in heaven—can they, who call the sabbath a delight, the queen of days, and the day of heaven—can they offer such selfish reasons for trampling the holy sabbath into the dust? “Let us awake to righteousness and sin not.”

But some man will say, “These answers are all good, when applied to *Christian professors*. They ought not to travel on the sabbath, and it is a shame to their profession when they do; but *I* make no pretensions to religion, though I believe the Bible to be the word of God.” Do you think, then, my friend, that your making no profession, gives you any liberty to transgress an acknowledged law of God? If you should command all your children to obey a certain precept, and only half of them should explicitly promise obedience, would the other half be under no obligation; or under less obligation to obey you? Why do you not, on the same ground you have taken, plead an exemption from yielding obedience to the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th commandments? When you are at home, you do not hold that it is right for *you* to work in your field on the Lord's day, any more than for your neighbor who is a professor; why, then, should you have any more right than he, to pursue your *journey*? Besides, my friend, if you are no Christian, it is time that you were a Christian. To attain to this, the word of God gives this direction among others—“Let the wicked *forsake his way*.” Again, it is said, “*Cease to do evil*, learn to do well.” Certainly, our impenitence cannot be offered as a reasonable excuse for any neglect of

duty, when the impenitence itself is considered as highly criminal. "God commandeth all men every where to repent." He also requires fruits meet for repentance. He requires every thing which is right, and forbids every thing which is wrong; and these requirements and prohibitions are binding on *all men*. Let no one therefore plead an exemption from the duty of resting on the sabbath according to the commandment; or an exemption from any other duty enjoined in the word of God.

## FOURTH DISCOURSE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures.————

ALL believers in the inspiration of the scriptures, are agreed in the belief of the Old Testament sabbath. They all believe, there *was* a sabbath-day ; but they do not all believe there is a sabbath-day now under the present dispensation. Here let it be remarked, That if the sabbath ever came to an end, it could not be until the death of Christ ; for the Old Testament dispensation lasted until that time : therefore nothing from the example of Christ, or of his disciples, while he was with them, can be pleaded against the present existence of a sabbath, without making it operate against the unexceptionableness of their obedience to the divine law. Christ evidently thought, that in *fulfilling all righteousness*, it behoved him to observe all the peculiar prescriptions of the Old Testament. He attended the passover, and the other Jewish feasts, not only while a child, but after he entered on his public ministry, and even until his death. He required a leper whom he healed, to show himself to the priest, and offer for his cleansing what *Moses* had commanded. It is a common thing, if I mistake not, for those who consider the law of the sabbath as binding only upon the ancient church, to make much use of the example of Christ, to justify their sentiment. But it is wrong to make this use of it ; for if *we* are not bound to keep the sabbath, Jesus Christ was bound to keep it as holy as the fourth commandment required. Let therefore a tender regard to the character of our Savior, induce every one to relinquish

*this argument*, which has been brought to favor the abrogation of the sabbath.

Instead of further pursuing my plan of going from one scripture to another in regular order, making remarks on each ; I propose to devote this discourse to prove the *perpetuity* and *change* of the sabbath. In doing this, those appropriate passages, which are still forward of us in the sacred volume, will naturally be introduced.

*First.* A few arguments will be brought to prove the *perpetuity* of the weekly sabbath. This will require the repetition of some of those arguments which have been already used in another place. The perpetual obligation of keeping holy to the Lord one day every week, is capable of being proved by such arguments as these :

1. The sabbath was instituted before the fall, and could not therefore be a ceremonial institution. The various sacrifices and washings, of which we read in the Old Testament, were added to the moral law because of transgressions. [Gal. iii. 19.] These observances were binding on the church until the great sacrifice was offered, and the Spirit was marvellously poured out ; then they ceased to be binding. But how can the abrogation of these superadded institutions, affect the existence of the weekly sabbath, which was established by the Creator before there was even any room made for *their* establishment ? If man had not become an apostate, the law of ceremonies could not have been : but the sabbath existed before man apostatized, and would have continued from the beginning to the end of the world, (if an end had ever come,) provided man had remained innocent. Does any one hesitate, whether the weekly sabbath would have been a perpetually binding institution, during the age of the world, if man had not fallen from his original rectitude ? I think no one can have any hesitation on the subject. How then can it be, that the introduction of sin, together with the plan of redemption,

should set aside our obligation to keep holy to the Lord the weekly sabbath? As well might it be supposed, that when the ceremonial law was abrogated the law of *marriage* went with it. *Marriage* and the *sabbath* were both instituted at the same time, and before man became a fallen creature. The fall did not destroy the institution of marriage. It was before the fall, and after the fall :—It was under the law, and existed after the law of ceremonies had vanished away. All these changes in the state of man, and the state of the church, produced no change in this institution, which was cotemporary with that of the holy sabbath. During all these changes, it is still the will of the Creator, ‘that a man should leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and that they two should be no more twain, but one flesh.’ So, during all these changes, the sabbath, which was divinely instituted before them all, must be supposed to exist.

2. The perpetuity of the weekly sabbath, may be argued from the perpetuity of the *week itself*; or the continued practice of reckoning seven days together into one portion of time, and then beginning a new series of days until the number of seven is again completed. The dividing of time into *days* and *years*, is natural; but it is not so with dividing it into *weeks*. No reason, that I know of, can be assigned for this, but that which is contained in the scriptural account of the creation; that in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and rested the seventh day. Thus God, the Creator, made the week of seven days; assigning six days to labor and one to a holy rest. His most express object, in this division of time, appears to be the establishment of the *sabbatical day*. And it would be natural to suppose, that if he intended at the commencement of the Christian era, or any other period, to abolish the weekly sabbath, he would abolish the *week itself*, which seems to have been formed on purpose to give existence and notoriety to the sabbath. When the French Convention

chose to annihilate the weekly sabbath, they wisely struck the axe at the root of the tree, by annihilating the week itself. Instead of reckoning time by weeks, they determined to reckon by *decades*, that is, periods of ten days. But we do not find that the Founder of the Christian religion, when he appeared on earth, changed the weeks into decades; or into any thing else. He found seven-day weeks, and he left such weeks, as is manifest from the whole New Testament. This is a presumptive proof, that the sabbath, that eminent day of the week for which the week was made, is still to be continued, *with all its peculiar duties*.

3. We must be allowed to repeat the argument, derived from God's placing the law of the sabbath in the midst of nine other commandments, which, it is acknowledged on all hands, are binding on *Christians*, as much as they were on *Jews*. Is it not very difficult to account for it, that Jehovah, who is a God of order, and not of confusion, should place a ceremonial institute, which was to vanish away, in such a situation as this? Is there no important instruction to be gained by these commandments being written on *stone*? There were other sabbaths appointed to the Jewish church, which were not from the beginning; these were not written upon the tables of stone. Commandments perpetually obligatory, it is true, were written upon parchment, or paper; but when so few as ten short commandments were written upon *stones*, and that with the *finger of God*, can we suppose that one of these ten was a ceremonial precept, which has long since vanished away? I fear the sentiment will lead, (whatever may now be thought of its harmlessness,) to make light of our obligation to obey the other nine commandments, which by the same finger of God were written on the same tables of stone. If we think that Christ has abolished one of the ten commandments, we shall flatter ourselves that he has, at least softened down the others; until we make the easiness of his yoke to consist in his

giving us liberty unrestrainedly to fulfil the lusts of the flesh and of the mind.

4. *Stated seasons* of public worship are foretold as existing in gospel days. Isa. lxvi. 23; "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." It will be granted by all, that this refers to the gospel times. It refers particularly to the times of the Millennium. It clearly points out public worship. It also shows that it will be repeated from time to time; and that all the world will be united in observing the same periodical seasons of worship. It is also explicitly said, that this public worship of Jehovah shall be performed from one *sabbath* to another.

But it will be objected, That it is also said, that it will be from one *new moon* to another. The objector would argue, that since we do not from this prediction infer the continued observance of the new moon sabbath, neither ought we to infer the continued observance of the weekly sabbath. We acknowledge, that the continuance of Old Testament ordinances cannot be proved from the application of their distinguishing names to the ordinances of the New Testament; for the prophets made use of the things which then were, to express the things which were to come. The prediction which is now under our eye, proves at least, that in gospel days there would be stated and frequent seasons of publicly worshipping God, in which mankind would agree. My present object is not so much to disprove the continued observance of the new moon, as to prove that under the gospel dispensation, there is *some stated time* to be devoted to the worship of God. If any stated time is to be devoted to the exercises of religion, the weekly sabbath certainly has the *first claim*. This was instituted before all other times; even before the revolt of man. And this was distinguished from all the rest, by being spoken by the living God in the

audience of the chosen people, and written with his own finger in the midst of the moral law. If among all the holy seasons enjoined on the Jewish church, any one has come down to the Christian church, I think there can be no manner of doubt but it must be that which was first enjoined on the human race, before the Jews existed; and which, after their existence, was revealed to them in such a way as to mark its pre-eminence above all the rest.

In connection with the predictions of stated and periodical seasons of worship, to be observed by all who should embrace the gospel, it will be proper to notice, that *the piety* of gospel converts is foretold by their strict and conscientious observance of the *sabbath*. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him—every one that *keepeth the sabbath* from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;" Isa. lvi. 6. How could the prophet speak of the piety of Gentile converts in gospel days, as manifesting itself by keeping the sabbath from polluting it, if *no sabbath* was to exist in gospel times?

5. The same reasons exist for the *perpetuity* of the sabbath, as for its being *instituted*: and *no reasons* exist for its discontinuance. One reason given for the institution of a weekly sabbath, is the need of a *resting* day. This is mentioned, Deut. v. 14; "*That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.*" All will see in a moment, that as far as this is a reason in favor of the institution, it operates equally in favor of its continuance.

Another design of the institution of the sabbath, was to be a weekly remembrancer of our dependance on God, for our existence, and for all our possessions. The weekly rest is a standing memorial of the Mosaic account of the creation; and the careful observance of this holy day, is a repeated acknowledgment that we give credit to this account. And though the holy rest is now changed to another day, to be a memorial of a still more important work than that



of creation, it does not cease to answer its first design, namely, to remind us, that in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them.

A third reason for the continuance of the sabbath, is its necessity for the preservation of *public worship*, and giving opportunity for *religious instruction*. The scriptures make it our duty to worship, not only every one in his closet, and every family at home, but that *congregations* should assemble to offer up united prayers, confessions and thanksgivings to the common Parent of us all. "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people; in the courts of the Lord's house." Public worship is greatly for the honor of God. It resembles heaven, where great multitudes unitedly adore and praise the Lord. Public worship is very improving to the piety and social harmony of those who heartily engage in it. But public worship cannot be attended, without a *public day* of worship. If God therefore designed that public worship should be kept up under the gospel, (and nothing can be more evident,) his wisdom would certainly lead him to appoint stated seasons for its observance. Religious instruction ought to be communicated, more or less, every day; but public instruction requires a particular day, as well as a place of assembling. The command to the gospel teacher, is, "Preach the word; be instant *in season*; out of season." This command supposes there are regular and stated seasons for preaching the word of God. In other words, it supposes a sabbath-day. If there were no day in the week which, by way of eminence, was a day of religion, religious instruction would probably be much more neglected even in families. God's design to perpetuate *holy time* to the end of the world, seems then nearly as evident as his design to preserve true religion from becoming extinct. For if it be so essential to the preservation of religion in the world, that time should be taken for public worship and preaching the word, it

would never be left optional with us, whether to take this time, or not. And if He, who is the only Potentate, had not designated the *very time* to be devoted to public worship and instruction, it would have been much the same, as leaving it to our judgment whether or not to take *any time* for these purposes. If, in opposition to this, it should be said; ‘That those Christian denominations, which do not believe that God has fixed upon any particular time to be devoted to religion, do nevertheless statedly attend on the duties of public worship;’ it may be accounted for in one or the other of these two ways. *First.* They may have some belief still remaining upon their minds, that the weekly sabbath is not done away. *Secondly.* If *they* do not believe that God has fixed on this time, and obliged them to devote it to his worship, still the circumstance, that the greater part of the Christian world do believe it, and therefore statedly observe it as holy time, suggests it to them as a time proper for *them* also to meet together for religious purposes. For let it be remembered, that those religious denominations, and particular congregations, which do not believe that God has given the *Christian church* a holy day, observe the same as a day of public worship, (if they observe any) which *we* observe, who believe that God has given a sabbath to the *Christian*, as well as to the *Jewish church*. If all Christian denominations were at once to disbelieve the divine obligation of observing holy time; and if they could, with this, forget that God’s people ever were under such obligation, or that there ever was any particular day, or portion of time, set apart from secular to religious duties, is it to be expected that they would all agree among themselves, to observe one day every week, and that the same day?\*

\* To all these arguments in favor of the perpetuity of the weekly sabbath, it is objected that a different doctrine is taught, Gal. iv. 10, 11 : Col. ii. 16, 17; and Rom. xiv. 5.

Having attended to some arguments in favor of the perpetual obligation of observing *a weekly sabbath*, I proceed,

*Secondly* ; To suggest some arguments in favor of a *change* of the sabbath from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week.

If in the passage in the epistle to the Galatians, the *Lord's day* is included among the days which they are condemned for observing, it will follow, that it is *wrong* for us to observe it, or even to make it a stated season for public worship. They who bring this text to prove the abrogation of the weekly sabbath, and to do away the moral obligation of Christians to keep any holy day, do nevertheless view it as an *innocent* thing to make a stated practice of meeting together on the first day of the week : But Paul says to those who observe *days*, "I am afraid of you." The church at Galatia was evidently much troubled, and not a little corrupted by Judaizing Christian teachers. These men were full of a Pharisaic spirit. They did not understandingly embrace the Christian system ; nor did they discern the true intent of the ceremonial law, and the Jewish economy. If they had, it would have served as a school-master, to teach them the necessity of Christ, and its own insufficiency to save. When Paul heard, that his brethren of the Galatian church, who were not Jews but Gentiles, were, by the instruction of these mongrel Christian preachers, adopting the peculiar rites of the Jewish dispensation ; such as the observance of those days, and months, and times, and years, which were a part of the law which had waxed old and vanished away ; he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed labor upon them in vain. But do you think that this apostle, if he were now present, would be afraid of those Christian churches among us, which are the most careful in their sanctifying the weekly sabbath, lest gospel labor had been bestowed upon them in vain ? We find at this day that those, who enter most fully into the scheme of salvation by grace alone, are, at the same time, apt to be the strictest in their observance of the Lord's day.

The passage in Col. ii. 16, 17, has also reference to these ceremonial observances : "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days ; which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ." In this connexion, Christ is said to have blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us. But he did not surely blot out any thing which was written on the two tables of stone. There were many holy days, and sabbaths, (i. e. days and years of rest from secular business,) which the God of Israel enjoined on his people to observe, besides that weekly rest, or holy sabbath, which in the beginning he enjoined on Adam and all his sons. These sabbaths, being part of the ceremonial law, pointed to Christ and the privileges of gospel days. They were a shadow of which Christ was the body or substance. The apostle would not have any one judge and condemn these Christians, who held the *Head*—who

1. The first argument, which I shall make use of to favor the change of the sabbath, will be drawn from what is said in the scriptures about the work of *redemption's* eclipsing the work of *creation*. It is said concerning Christ, that *all things* were made *for him*. The first creation, which was

had embraced the substance, because they disused the shadows. If it can be proved, that the grand design of the weekly sabbath was to serve as a type of the coming of Christ, this would do much toward proving that it is now no longer obligatory. But this I conclude has not been proved. The Gentile converts did not observe the same day of the week as a sabbath, which had been observed by the Jews: nor did they eat of the paschal lamb, or practise the rite of circumcision: but they kept holy the *first day* of the week; they ate of the *Lord's supper*, and used the initiating rite of *baptism*. For these differences they were judged and condemned by the unbelieving Jews, though they held themselves as sacredly bound to attend on those institutions, in their New Testament form, as the Jews had done to attend upon them under the form of the Old Testament dispensation.

The passage in the 14th chapter of Romans, may perhaps, be thought more decisively to level all distinction of days in New Testament times: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." To understand what the apostle meant in this passage it is proper to attend to the scope of his argument. In another place, speaking of the day of judgment, he says, Then shall *every man* have praise of God. Yet this same apostle abundantly teaches, that many men will at that solemn and decisive day be condemned of God, and have tribulation and anguish; that the wrath of God will come on them, and that they will reap corruption. "Every man who is to have praise of God," must mean every *good* man: It was of such men the apostle was speaking. So in the passage now before us, he is not speaking of *all days*, but of *all ceremonial days*. In the same argument, he says, "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not." There was no Christian who did not eat; there was none but that believed he had a right to eat something besides herbs; for the Creator had most expressly given man liberty to eat *flesh*: But in the Levitical law he had restricted him to certain animals. Among the primitive converts the dispute must have been about eating of the animals, which by that law were considered unclean. Some whose faith, and whose insight into Christianity, were weak, would sooner confine themselves to bread and vegetables, than to eat of the meats which they esteemed as unclean. As the dispute was not about *all meats*, so it was not about *all days*: It was only about the days distinguished by the ceremonial law. Some still viewed the new moon, the feast of passover, the pentecost, the day of atonement, &c. as holy days—

finished in six days, is considered as the *scaffolding*, and the church as the *temple* which is to abide for ever. In Isa. lxxv. 17, 18, it is said, "For behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Here are two creations brought into view. The first is that of which we have an account in the beginning of the Bible. It was finished in six days, and on the seventh day God rested from his work, and therefore blessed the day, and sanctified it. The other creation mentioned in this passage, is called *Jerusalem* and *her people*. It is *Jerusalem which is above*, which is the mother of all the children of God. This new and spiritual creation, *the church of Christ*, is spoken of as far surpassing the first in beauty and glory. In comparison to the *new creation*, the *first* will not be worthy to be remembered or come into mind. This prophetic account of the superior excellency of the new creation, very naturally suggests the idea of changing the day of rest, so as would be calculated to present the new creation, that is, THE WORK OF REDEMPTION, in a more conspicuous point of view than the six days' creation. And this is evidently done by making the day, on which the Redeemer rested from his work of suffering and abasement, to be the Christian sabbath. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest (a *sabbatism*) to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his:" Heb. iv. 9, 10. As God ceased from the work of creating the world, and made a *sabbatism*; so Christ ceased from his work of suffering, to redeem the world, and he also

as better than other days: others viewed these days as now reduced to a level with common days. But as the ceremonial law, at its first establishment, found *one distinguished day*, one day which was better than the other, neither its institution, nor its abrogation could affect that day.

made a *sabbatism*; and both are an *emblem* of the *rest*, (i. e. of the keeping of a sabbath,) which remaineth to the people of God in the coming world.

2. There are predictions in the Old Testament, which intimate a change of the sabbath. This is pretty clearly intimated, Psal. cxviii. 22—24. “The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.” The New Testament scriptures make it certain that this corner stone is Christ. He was in the most striking manner rejected of the Jewish builders, when they cried, “Away with him, crucify him, crucify him.” And when he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, he did, in an eminent sense, become the head stone of the corner. “*This*,” say the church, “is *the day* which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.” The event has explained this to mean, that Christians would make the day of Christ’s resurrection, *their sabbath*, in which to pray, and praise, and hear the word. A holy rejoicing, and not a frolicsome mirth, was predicted. It will be seen by Dr. Watts’ version of this Psalm, that he viewed it as pointing out the resurrection-day sabbath.

“This is the day the Lord hath made,  
 “He calls the hours *his own*;  
 “Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,  
 “And praise surround the throne.”

There seems to be a prediction of the change of the sabbath, at the close of the 43d chapter of Ezekiel. “Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it, and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be that upon the eighth day and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings.” It is generally agreed that these last

chapters of Ezekiel refer to gospel days, and ultimately to the days of the Millennium. Gospel worship is predicted under the emblems of the ceremonial dispensation. But we are not to understand the predicted worship itself as typical, though the *altar*, and the *burnt-offerings* and *peace-offerings*, is the language of types. The New Testament has its ministers, and its altar which sanctifieth every gift offered upon it, and its offerings of prayer and praise. It must, therefore, have its *days* of offering up these acceptable sacrifices. And the prediction, now under our eye, seems to intimate that it would be a *different* day from what had before been devoted to the special services of religion. It shall be that upon the *eighth day, and so forward*, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar. The *eighth* day is the next after the seventh, and is therefore the same as the *first* day of the week; the day upon which Christian "priests" minister at the altar: and thus it is to continue to the end of time.

3. The *first day* of the week is in the New Testament called the *Lord's day*. It is so called, Rev. i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the *Lord's day*." There can be no doubt but that the first day of the week is meant. This has been the name, which Christians have given to it from the commencement of the Christian era, and is as much the distinguishing name of the first day of the week, as *Monday* and *Tuesday*, are of the second and third days. This is fully conceded by a writer of eminence, who nevertheless disputes divine authority for any sabbath under the Christian dispensation. He says, "I make no doubt but that by the *Lord's day* was meant the *first* day of the week; for we find no footsteps of any distinction of days, which could entitle any other to that appellation. The subsequent history of Christianity corresponds with the accounts delivered on this subject in scripture."

If this point is conceded, that the *first day* of the week is

what the apostle John means by the *Lord's day*, it will afford a strong argument in favor both of the *perpetuity* and *change* of the sabbath. What can be meant, by giving the appropriate name of *Lord's day* to a particular day of the week? The *name* marks the day as *His*; as the *Lord's supper*, and the *Lord's house*, distinguish the sacrament from a common supper; and the temple or sanctuary from a common dwelling. Time is all the Lord's; yet in Isaiah, fifty-eighth chapter, and thirteenth verse, we hear him challenging a special property in a *particular day*, by calling it *His day*. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on *my* holy day." Why does he say concerning the sabbath, it is *my day*, only to point it out as a day separated from common, to religious purposes, and consecrated by his own appointment to his *immediate* service? And why, in the inspired writings of the New Testament, do we read of *the Lord's day*, if there be no day *now* set apart for the same holy purposes, and by the same *divine authority*? And this appropriate name being *transferred* from the *seventh* to the *first* day, proves, that the first day of the week, and not the seventh, is *now the holy day*; and that it is to be observed as the weekly sabbath. There may be some Christian readers who never thought that this name of *Lord's day*, given in the New Testament to the first day of the week, did any thing towards determining their obligation to keep it holy to the Lord, or to pointing out its particular duties, any more than that the names of the other days of the week determine the particular duties belonging to them. But I am sure they will think otherwise, when they have duly examined this significant name.

4. A change of the day of keeping the sabbath, may be argued from the *apostolic practice*, that is, the practice of the apostles themselves, and the cotemporary practice of the churches which they planted. They evidently distinguish-



ed the first day of the week as a day of *assembling*, and of attending on Christian ordinances. In the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xx. verses 6, 7, we have this account : “ And we came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days. And upon the *first day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” As Paul was at Troas a full week, he was there on the seventh day sabbath, but there is no mention made of their meeting on that day for public worship, for preaching, and the breaking of bread ; but when the first day arrived, the disciples met for these purposes. When the apostles preached to the unconverted Jews, they met with them on their own day. They watched every time and opportunity, to make known to them the mystery of the Gospel. But when they were with churches of converted disciples, they distinguished the first day, as the day of meeting together for the purposes of religion. That the first day of the week was thus generally distinguished among the primitive churches, may be learned from 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2 : “ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the *first day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” From this it appears, that in the church of Corinth, and the churches of Galatia, and in fine, in Christian churches in general, the first day of the week was distinguished as a day of religious meeting, and would therefore be a suitable day for a charitable contribution. If the arguments which have been brought to prove that there now exists *a sabbath*, do actually prove it ; I think there is light enough from the apostolic practice to make it evident, that the first day of the week is *that sabbath*.

5. The practice of *the Christian church since the days of the apostles*, affords an argument of considerable weight in favor of the change of the sabbath. It is evident from

the history of the Christian church, that she has all along had her holy day, her day for attending to the word and worship of God; and also that this day has been the *first*, and not the seventh day of the week. This has been the day observed, not only by the corrupt church of Rome, but by all the protestant churches, with very few exceptions. Now it is very difficult to account for this, on the ground, that the seventh day is still the divinely appointed sabbath. It is difficult to see how the Christians should all make a mistake about the particular day to be kept holy. It is not so strange that there should be a mistake about some circumstance, such as the time of beginning the day. It is also difficult to believe, that the King of Zion would suffer almost his whole church, in times of primitive purity, as well as times of apostacy; and also in times of reformation, to mistake the very day which he had appointed for the sabbath. This at least, in connexion with other things, furnishes a presumptive proof of divine authority for the change of the day.

6. The *transfer of the blessing* from the seventh to the first day, shows that this is now the *hallowed* day. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." If it can be made to appear, that God now makes the first day eminently *the day of blessing*, it will be a strong proof that he has *sanctified* it; or made it the holy day. I have already quoted a passage from the 43d chapter of Ezekiel, which predicts, that under the gospel, the priests (i. e. the ministers of Christ) should make their offerings thence forward on the eighth day; which must mean the same as the first day of the week. In connexion with this new day of making their offerings, it is said, "And I will *accept* you, saith the Lord God." It is implied, not only that God would accept of the offerings, but also of the new sabbath, on which these offerings would in time to come be made.

It was on the first day of the week, even the very day on

which the Savior arose from the dead, that he made the hearts of the two disciples burn within them, by opening their understandings to understand the scriptures. This was properly *the first Christian sabbath*, (though it is probable that the disciples did not yet understand the change which was to take place;) and that sweet communion which the Savior granted to these disciples, and that increasing knowledge of the scriptures which he afforded them, was no doubt designed as a *specimen* of the blessing which he would henceforth put upon that day. "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." John xx. 19. This was a blessed sabbath evening; the risen Savior was in the midst of them speaking words of peace.\*

The Pentecost fell on this day of the week, as will appear by reverting to Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. The first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, was surely a day *blessed of the Lord*. It was a day in which he stood by Peter, bidding him to cast his net on the right side of the ship; and made him a most successful fisher of men. How many thousands of souls, since that day, have been pricked in the heart on the Christian sabbath! And to how many has this been a spiritual birth-day! When the history of the work of redemption shall be fully disclosed, it will no doubt strikingly

\* Those Christians, who believe that the holy day begins and ends at the setting of the sun, do notwithstanding frequently devote the evening which succeeds the day to devotional exercises in a social manner, in which they often find that Christ is with them. And though they do not consider this evening as a part of the twenty-four hours, which constitute the Lord's day; still it grieves them to see this evening, which immediately succeeds the day of prayer, made *peculiar* by mirth and levity, which are striking indications that the sabbath, with all its solemn services, has made no deep and lasting impression upon the hearts of creatures bound to eternity.

appear, that *this is the day which the Lord hath blessed* and honored, as a harvest day for souls.

It was on the Lord's day, that the beloved disciple was *in the Spirit*. Peculiar manifestations were made to him on this day, and the probable reason why that day of the week is particularized on which he had these revelations made to him, is, to put honor on the day. The saints have communion with God on other days; but they are apt to look forward to the Lord's day, as a peculiarly blessed day. By their own experience they have learned, that it is good for them to keep it holy to the Lord: and that when they keep it most agreeably to the requirement contained in the fourth command, it is then the most blessed.

Another argument in favor of the holiness of the *Christian sabbath*, may be drawn from the evils which have been connected with a profanation of it. This day has been greatly profaned, and vice and iniquity in general have been manifestly fostered, and brought to a greater height by its profanation. It was noticed by Judge *Hale*, of England, that among the many criminals which were convicted of capital crimes while he was Judge, he found few but that, upon inquiry, would confess that they began their career of wickedness, by a loose conduct on the Lord's day. Although such miraculous manifestations of God's displeasure are not to be looked for, as were common during the days of inspiration; yet wise observers, in our own days, have noticed some pretty signal manifestations of God's displeasure against those, who have greatly polluted the Christian sabbath: and they have noticed his frowns on themselves for their own deviations from a conscientious hallowing of this day, which is called the Lord's.

But to all which has been offered in favor of *a change of the day*, it will perhaps be objected; That the commandment says, "But the *seventh* day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work." To this objec-

tion it may be replied: That to *worship* God is a part of the moral law. To *take time* from other services, to devote immediately to this worship, is also morally binding. While in this world, where a part of time must necessarily be devoted to secular employments, it is morally and perpetually binding on us, to sanctify a *seventh* part of time; for this is required in the moral law. The change of the day to be observed, does not destroy the command; for this applies, with equal force, to the day which the New Testament calls the LORD'S DAY. I know we should have no right, of ourselves, to make such an alteration as this: but the Lord of the sabbath could point out a new day to be observed, without repealing the original law. And we think the reasons which have been given are sufficient to lead to a conclusion, that *He himself* has made the change. The fourth commandment still has all its force: Six days we labor, and then we have one day of rest, which is holy to the Lord. These holy days come in the same regular succession, as under the law. It is true, that now they are designed, not only to remind us of the work of creation, but of the still more wonderful and glorious work of redemption. Surely there is nothing in such a change as this, that looks like an annihilation of the commandment. The ten commandments, delivered from Mount Sinai, are all of them still binding upon the children of men. And the Savior says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

## FIFTH DISCOURSE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures.—

A REVIEW of the scripture testimony concerning the sabbath, will suggest some remarks and reflections.

I. The weekly sabbath holds a very *conspicuous* place in the scriptures. We find it upon the first page of the Bible. We find it in the midst of the decalogue. We find it spread through both Testaments. The texts which have been introduced and remarked upon, in the preceding discourses, are not a few. If placed one after the other in continued order, they would be enough to make several chapters. Would all this be, in a book which was written by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, if the sabbath were an unimportant institution; or if it were unimportant in comparison with other things? Where there is “precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little,” concerning any institution, it is evident, that such institution is considered to be of great importance. We infer the importance of the subject from the frequent mention made of it in the scriptures; and also from the great *solemnity* with which it is mentioned. The sanctification of the sabbath is strongly enforced, and the profanation of it most severely threatened.

If God has scattered instruction concerning his holy day through the whole sacred volume, then it must be a subject worth engaging the attention of all those to whom the word of God comes. Let us on this point imitate the Jews of

Berea, who searched the scriptures daily, to see whether the things which they heard were so. If any think it a matter of little or no consequence, they will not be much engaged to inquire what God has revealed concerning it.

II. It is important to remark, that there are *two errors* concerning the sabbath, both of which have a dangerous and pernicious tendency. One of these errors consists in making the sabbath a *mere carcass*, without spirit and life : the other error consists in depriving it wholly of its *body*, the *external* part, under pretence of great regard to the spirituality of it. The first of these was the error of the Pharisees, who lived in the time of our Savior. They were a generation very destitute of true religion ; yet they appeared, in a certain way, to pay great attention to the observance of the sabbath. They were perhaps in the sight of God as wicked as those, who, in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, greatly polluted the sabbath by their loose practices. But their wickedness, as it respected the sabbath and many other religious observances, ran in quite a different channel. They adhered to the *external* of the commandment, and were even unnecessarily scrupulous in some things ; but the *external* of it was *all* which they regarded. And this they did to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God.

The opposite error, of *spiritualizing away* the external of the commandment, is no less dangerous ; and it may be done by those, who possess substantially the same character with the scribes and Pharisees. They will boastingly say, "We are no Pharisees ;" when God, who seeth their hearts, beholds them disregarding the *letter* of his precept, from a vain conceit of a high regard to the *spirit* of it. They may say, "We have the *spirit* of the sabbath, and you have the *letter* :—We have the sabbath *within*, and you have it *without* :—We keep sabbath *every day*, and you have it but *once a week*." Let these claims to peculiar spir-

ity be canvassed. The letter or body, without the spirit, we acknowledge is dead ; but a man is not a man complete without spirit and *body too*. God has made, and designs to perpetuate, both the spirit and body. So God has made the spirit and the letter of the sabbath ; and designs that both shall be regarded. It must be displeasing to him, to see one part made use of to oppose and destroy the other, when he regards them both.

It has been said by those who oppose the *external* of the commandment, “ *We have the sabbath within, you have it without.*” In reply to this it may be asked ; How it is known that we, who have the sabbath without, have it not also within ? Did not an apostle say, “ Show me thy faith *without* thy works, and I will show thee my faith *by* my works ?” What works are so proper to show an inward regard to the sabbath, as refraining from all those things forbidden to be done on that day, and performing the duties required ? Is it a suitable way to manifest that God’s law is in our *heart*, by avoiding it in our *practice* ?

But, say our opponents, “ We keep sabbath *every day*, and you have it *but once a week.*” What is meant by this ? Does this mean that they have love to God, and other holy affections and meditations all the week ? It is in a figurative sense only, that this can be called a continual sabbath. In the paradisaic state, there was nothing but such holy affections continually, and yet there was but one sabbath-day in the week. In the ten commandments we are required to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and that perpetually every day in the week ; and yet in those commandments we are required to keep but one day in the week holy to the Lord. All the holy affections, which can exist in the heart, will not of themselves constitute a sanctification of the sabbath. Keeping the sabbath is a *particular way* of manifesting love to God ; if this particular way is not taken, the commandment is not



obeyed. It is so with the other commandments. The first commandment requires, that the living and true God should be the supreme object of love. The second commandment forbids the making of images, and bowing down to them as though they were gods. Now let me ask, Can *this* command be *inwardly* obeyed, and *outwardly* disobeyed? Can the outward part be disregarded from love to the spirit of the commandment? If so, then *papists*, and even *pagans*, give evidence of being more spiritual than any denomination of protestant Christians, who are all so scrupulous as to attend to the external of the commandment. But let us proceed: Did any one ever suppose, that profane swearers and blasphemers gave peculiar evidence of love to the *spirit* of the *third commandment*, because they pay such little attention to the *external* of it? Or has any one supposed, that there was any way of keeping the third commandment, short of taking heed to our *lips*, as well as to our hearts, that they do not pollute the holy name of Jehovah? The fourth commandment, as distinguished from the others, does not consist in any particular frame or state of the *heart*; but in a *peculiar manner* of spending one particular, specified day of the week. Now, to call all the days of the week sabbath-days, is, instead of honoring the commandment, annihilating it.

Let this rule of spiritualizing away the letter of the commandment, be applied to the *second table* of the law, and what work it will make. It will make, as to externals, *disobedient children, murderers, adulterers, thieves, and false witnesses*; and yet all this be done under the cover of peculiar spirituality! No obedience to the *external* of the commands; but so much more spirit and life within! This is soaring above dull formality, and a scrupulous attention to the letter of the commands!

This would be Antinomianism, carried to its full length. There have been some, who were not ashamed to avow it

in all these horrid consequences; even as it respects the commands which relate to our duty to men. Yet the most, perhaps, would not be willing to follow it thus far; and still as it respects the *sabbath*, and other *religious* duties, the principle is adopted, of substituting the spirituality *instead* of the external observance. The scripture requires, that God should in all things be glorified; that whatever we do, we should do it *heartily* to the Lord. This surely will apply to all religious institutions. Far be it from me to speak lightly of the *spirituality* of religious duties and observances. Holy love and fervency of spirit are the *life* of the whole. Without these, the sabbath is not acceptably sanctified. To promote these, is an object of great moment. But I would that all might understand, that the way to promote a spiritual observance of the sabbath, is not to destroy or undervalue an observance of the letter of the commandment. The truth lies between resting in a strict external observance of the sabbath, on the one hand; and a spiritualizing away of the external observance of it, on the other. The command has an *outside* and an *inside*; to both we must pay careful attention, if we would please God. While neither the outside nor inside are to be trusted in as that righteousness in which a sinner is to be accepted before God.

The typical ceremonies of the Old Testament are at an end. To revive them would not subserve the cause of truth; as it would imply that we were still to look for their accomplishment in the coming and work of the Redeemer. But though the typical ceremonies are at an end, it does not follow, that *all external religious observances* are done away. The weekly sabbath, prayer, preaching the gospel, singing psalms and hymns of praise, and the administration of the sacraments, are to be observed in these gospel days, in which it is our happy lot to live. These all have an outside to them; and it is of the greatest consequence to the *well-being* (if not to the very *existence*) of Christianity,

that the outside should not be treated with neglect. Prayer is the desire of the heart, offered up before God. Jesus taught us by precept and example, to take *seasons* for retired prayer. To the praise of Daniel it is spoken, that he stately prayed *three times* a day. *Stated family prayer* is a duty of great importance. Husbands and wives are strictly charged to live together in such a manner, as that their prayers might not be hindered. We are to worship together, and to sing praises with the spirit, and with the understanding. We are not only to believe, but we are to be *baptized*. We are not only to eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood by faith; but we are to eat of the *bread* and drink of the *cup*, which show forth the Lord's death until he come. Christ appointed men to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments; who were to commit their office to others, that in this way the church might never be without her teachers, who should be distinguished from their brethren, by being solemnly and publicly set apart to the work of the ministry. If all the divine ordinances and institutions are kept up, without being kindled by the fire of inward devotion, they are like the body without the soul. The devotion of the heart is *indispensable*. But let us suppose all the ordinances to be laid aside; and would not Christianity appear quite another thing from what it appears in the New Testament? These external ordinances are the means of expressing, and also of improving, the devotion of the heart. When the external observance of one of these ordinances is levelled at, it is apt to prove a *sweeping stroke*, to destroy all the rest. I have therefore brought them into view in this connexion; that it may be seen what will be the consequence of giving up *one*. If you give up the sabbath, and are content with having *no holy time*, only when you shall happen to feel religiously disposed, you will give up the *stated* morning and evening devotions of the *closet* and of the *family*. You will next give up the sacraments

of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*; and then the *stated ministry* of the word will appear too formal. This will be making the frames of our heart, and not the command of God, the rule by which to regulate our practice. It ought to be remembered, that the commands of God were made before we were born. They are *right*, and *fit in themselves*, and are not at all dependent for their rectitude on our disposition to obey. They detect our errors; they show us what we should have done in time past; and what we ought to do in time to come. A perfect conformity to these divine rules, in feelings and practice, is the *mark* towards which we are incessantly to press. Let it be kept in mind, that the *Lord* hath *hallowed* his sabbath, whether we keep it holy or not. And our indisposition to keep it holy, will not induce him to repeal the law of the sabbath, and thus reduce it to common time.

III. We remark, that in view of the light reflected on the sabbath, by the various scriptures which speak of it, there is no great difficulty for the candid inquirer, to find out what is meant by *sanctifying*, and what by *profaning* it. Every exercise proper for the sabbath is not particularized; nor is every thing which is a breach of it; but so many things are particularized of both sorts, that the rest may be learned from their resemblance to these. *Examples* are given us in the Bible, both of the sanctification, and of the profanation of the Lord's day. These are valuable, as they are the judgments or decisions of the Lawgiver himself; from whose judgment there is no appeal. We have the decision of God himself on the case of gathering manna; also on the case of gathering sticks, or wood, on the sabbath-day. We have the judgment of the Lawgiver on the case of bringing things to, or carrying them from, market; and all other bearing of burdens on the sabbath. The Lord, in explaining his own requirement, teaches us, that on the sabbath we are to rest from labor, even in the season of *harvest*; that we are not

to do *our own ways*, find *our own pleasure*, or speak *our own words*. He teaches us, that the sabbath is to be a day for a holy convocation or meeting together for the duties of religion.

God is in all things to be glorified, even in the labor, business and recreation of the six days ; and nothing is to be done on any of these days, which does not have a tendency to bring glory to God. But in the concerns of this life, the *more immediate* object is to provide for ourselves *temporal conveniences* : but in the duties of religion, the *direct* and *most immediate* object is, to *honor God*, and seek to possess, and cultivate in ourselves and others that spirit and temper, which will make us resemble our Creator, and prepare us for heaven. The Bible sabbath, it is evident, is not a day for *acquiring property*, or for *acquiring scientific or political information*. *Divinity*, in its different branches, is the only study of the holy day, not only for *divines*, but also for philosophers and statesmen ; husbandmen and mechanics ; masters and servants ; parents and children. Books, which are not *irreligious*, are not admissible to be read on the sabbath, unless they expressly treat on the subject of religion. If this case is no where in the Bible decided by itself, it is evidently included under the direction, *not to speak our own words*. Our eagerness for the news, should not tempt us to read a newspaper on the Lord's day. If a letter fall into our hands on the sabbath, which is supposed to be a letter of business, it is evidently our duty to defer the reading of it until the sabbath is ended. If such a letter ought not to be *read* on the sabbath, certainly it ought not to be *written* on that day. If any should say, This is to be too particular ; I ask, Is it going beyond the spirit of the Bible ? " Say I these things as a man ; or saith not the law the same ? " Does not God, in the holy scriptures, say that you shall not *speak* your own words on his day ? and is it not equally a profanation of his day, to *write*

your own words, that is, words relating to the concerns of this life? I wish it to be kept in mind, that I am still addressing myself, not to *infidels*, but to those who *believe* in the divinity of the scriptures; and surely these must see the correctness of our reasoning.

“THE HOLY OF THE LORD,” is inscribed on the weekly sabbath throughout all generations. Let this inscription be read and understood, and we shall know what is meant by keeping the sabbath from polluting it. If any man will do the will of God, with respect to hallowing the sabbath, there is so much instruction afforded him in the Bible, that he will not often be at a loss what should be done, and what should be avoided, on this hallowed day.

IV. A review of the several scripture passages, which have been commented upon in the foregoing discourses, compared with the practice of those nations whom God has favored with the scriptures, will reflect light upon the present dispensations of Providence towards these favored nations. God has arisen to shake terribly the earth. The whole earth is disquieted; but it is *Christendom*, on which the vials of divine wrath are more especially poured out. It is where the sabbath is made known, and where it is greatly polluted. Not that this is the only sin of Christian nations; for it is never found alone. But from searching the scriptures on this particular point, we have here found enough to alarm the fears of all, who believe that the declarations of scripture express the feelings and purposes of the Divine mind. When in the days of king Josiah, the book of the law, which had been lost, was found, and read in his hearing, he rent his clothes, and sent his servants to the prophetess, saying, “Go ye inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to

all that which is written concerning us." (2 Kings, xxii.) If we had as much belief of Divine truth, and as much tenderness of heart, as this good prince of Judah, would not the words of God's book, which have been read in our hearing, make us tremble for ourselves, and for our country? Should we not say, "For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because we have not hearkened unto the words of this book." It was threatened to Israel, that if they did not let their land rest on the sabbaths which God had instituted, he would send them out of their land, that it might enjoy its sabbaths. Nehemiah tells those, whom he found encroaching upon the sabbath, that by this they were bringing *wrath upon Israel*. By the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord denounces destruction on Jerusalem, in case the people would not hearken to him, to hallow the sabbath-day. And now let us ask, Were these threatenings empty words? Did not the event prove that they were the words of *the God of truth*? The holy sabbath is now made known to *us*, and our obligation to keep it holy to the Lord, is certainly no less than theirs. The threatenings which were first delivered to Israel, are now transmitted to us, and belong to us as much as they did to them, if we follow in their steps, by treading God's holy day under our feet. And, my brethren, have we not done it, and that abundantly? I will not say, that we cannot become any more corrupt in this particular. We would, with gratitude, acknowledge that there are very many in our land, who do, in a greater or less degree, respect the sabbath, and divine institutions, (and those who reverence the sabbath and the sanctuary are the bulwark of the nation;) but still there is not a sabbath which comes and passes away, but there is an *immense accumulation* of the guilt of our nation, by the most evident and open contempt poured on that reasonable and excellent Divine command, "Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy." They who make the Bible the man

of their counsel, whatever may be their political sentiments, are more afraid of *God's righteous judgments* than of the greatest potentate on earth. And they know, that it is the *wickedness* of a nation which draws down these judgments. They believe, that if the ways of a nation were to please the Lord, he would make their enemies to be at peace with them. When therefore they see iniquity abounding, and coming in like a flood; when they notice that the proud are called happy, and they who work wickedness are set up; when, among other things, they see the sabbath of the Lord is greatly polluted, they are more distressed, not only as the honor of God, but as the well-being of their country is concerned, than though an army of barbarians, or of disciplined troops, were marching against them, with an intent to destroy them. They know, that if the Almighty is their friend, there are more for them than against them; but if His indignation is stirred up against them, none can help them. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him? whether it be done against a *nation*, or against a man only."

In these days, distinguished by abounding iniquity, and by the righteous judgments of Heaven, the Lord of Sabbath hath left us a remnant according to the election of grace. These are no doubt to be found in both of the two great political divisions in these States. These all unite in praying for the peace and prosperity of the nation. To obtain so desirable an end, they most earnestly pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and for a thorough and extensive diffusion of the spirit of Christianity. They would expect more from a *religious reformation*, an *effectual turning from every false way* unto the living God, than from any change which could take place in the political opinions and practice of the nation. They know that any political change, which should leave us trampling under foot divine



institutions, and serving diverse lusts, would not remove the controversy which the Most High has with us.

Those who regard the operation of the Divine hand, are greatly pained at the growing profanation of the sabbath. They are grieved that the general government, or its public functionaries, should not remember, that one day in the week is the Lord's day, when they make arrangements for carrying the mail, and transacting public business. They are convinced that nations, if they would have their ways please the Lord, should never make any laws or arrangements, to contravene the laws of God ; but that *nationally*, as well as *individually*, they should acknowledge their inferiority to HIM.\*

\* If the Constitution of the United States was purposely so framed that Congress should have no right to pass any law to regulate *religion*, surely it was not purposely so framed as to *oppose religion* ; unless it were framed by *downright infidels*. If the Constitution does not require Congress to enforce the observance of the Christian sabbath, surely it cannot require them to be *ignorant of the day* ; and to be ignorant of this, that He, who is higher than the highest, has commanded the observance of it. Surely the Constitution ought not so to be interpreted, (unless it be, in the highest sense, an infidel Constitution,) as to make it the duty of the General Government, to treat the *Lord's day* as though it were not. But let me ask, Is not the Lord's day prostrated in the dust, (as far as one thing can do it,) by the arrangements which are made for carrying the public mail ? Hundreds of men are employed every sabbath in riding to carry the mail, and postmasters without number, in opening and closing the mail ; while hosts of those, who are peculiarly fond to tell or hear some new thing, stand waiting for the key to be turned, which shall unlock to them things new and rare. Another evil is connected with carrying the mail on the sabbath—it is this ; That the mail is commonly carried by a *stage-driver*. He claims to be the servant of the General Government ; they have bid him proceed on his way on sabbaths, as well as other days ;—and this makes a covert for all his load of passengers. Thus, is the holy sabbath, by this arrangement, greatly polluted. We have been in a state of profound peace for more than twenty years since the establishment of the Federal Government. Has it been so important, that our newspapers and letters should *fly* to us ; or even that *public papers* should be so speedily forwarded, as to make carrying the mail a work of *necessity* for the sabbath ? With the Bible open before us, dare we say, it is *right* ? Do we believe that God approves of

Could these men who tremble at God's word, be indulged the most free access to the first ruler of the nation, and to all in authority, in the general, and particular governments of these United States, they would anxiously entreat them not to forget, that it is the SUPREME RULER whose hand is lifted up over us ; and that he is chastening us for our impiety and disobedience. They would gladly draw the attention of the whole nation to this consideration. If they could be heard by the whole nation, they would speak on this wise :

“Fellow Countrymen !

“We are not merely citizens of the United States ; we are also subjects of the moral government of the most high God. His laws are clearly revealed in the scriptures of truth, and they are laws which are good and righteous altogether. But *we* have walked contrary unto them ; and in doing so have dishonored his holy name, and done ourselves the greatest injury. We have disbelieved his word, taken

it ? Is God any less displeased because it is done by a *nation* ? or is he any less able to punish it ?

Government, under the appearance of avoiding every thing oppressive in the things of religion, may greatly oppress the subjects. For example ; If the legislature of this state should fix the sitting of the courts of justice upon a particular day of the *month*, without having any respect to the day of the *week*, they would require the judges and jury, the plaintiff and defendant, the attorneys and witnesses, to appear in court on the holy day, as it would sometimes fall out, when many of these men actually believed that the God of heaven, who was to be their Judge, had required them to separate this day from all the business of this life to the more important concerns of his everlasting kingdom. Such a law therefore would to a people, possessing such a faith, be oppressive. From this, it appears absolutely necessary that those men, who make laws for a Christian nation, should have some knowledge of the Christian scriptures, and of the laws and ordinances in which Christians feel themselves bound to walk. This train of thought suggests to the mind what an undesirable qualification *deism* must be in the man, who is to make and administer the laws among a people who feel themselves bound to conform to the religion of the Son of God.

his name in vain, *profaned his sabbaths*, and despised his holy things. We have been made proud by his multiplied favors, so that we have hardened our hearts against HIM, and against our fellow men. The works of the flesh are manifest in our land, some of which are these; "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Is it not the prevalence of these transgressions of the laws of God, which has caused him to whet his glittering sword, and with his hand to take hold on vengeance? And shall we even now, by our lightness under the scourge, and by persisting in sin, defy the Almighty to harm us? Some of our fellow countrymen have fallen before the sword, and thousands have fallen before the pestilence; and who can tell what a year will bring forth?\* These temporal sufferings, we should remember, are only a prelude to the more dreadful miseries, which will hereafter be endured by those who, being often reprov'd, have hardened their necks. Let us hearken to the advice given by the king of Nineveh to his subjects, at a time when destruction seemed to be at the door. He exhorted them to "cry mightily unto God, and to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in his hands;" for said he, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Some of you may say, These men are mad; an enthusiastic brain has made them view every thing through a false medium: but those of you, who have searched the scriptures, will be constrained to say, that we speak the words of *truth and soberness*. If our Bibles were not laid out of sight, or our consciences dreadfully stupified, *the single sin of a wanton profanation of the sabbath*, would be sufficient to awake our fears of the divine anger

\* The United States were now engaged in a war with Great Britain.

and indignation. And this sin is only one among a thousand. "Come and let us return unto the Lord ; for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." "But if ye will not hear, our soul shall weep in secret places for your *pride*."

In such language as this, would the godly address their fellow countrymen of all ranks and political opinions, at this time of general calamity. Let it be remembered, that *religion* is not a *party spirit* ; it is its nature to seek general good, and in this it wishes all to unite. It should be one consolation to the godly, that if they cannot communicate their feelings on these subjects to all the members of this extensive republic, they may with the utmost freedom pour out their hearts before God. They may confess their own sins, and the sins of the nation, before the mercy-seat. They may stand in the breach, by their fervent prayers, to turn away the wrath of the Lord from the land, which he has heretofore so greatly distinguished by his blessings.

V. In view of the passages of scripture, which have been examined in the preceding discourses, it is very manifest, that there is much profaning of the sabbath by the *visible church of Christ*. No Christian, even the most enlightened and sanctified, can say that he is wholly free from this sin ; yet there are many who are pretty uniformly exemplary in their observance of the sabbath. Would to God it were so with all who have named the name of Christ ! But in the Christian church, it is to be feared, are found those who labor on the Lord's day ; those who trade ; those who travel ; those who devote the day to recreation ; those who read profane histories, novels and newspapers ; and those who speak their own words without any restraint ; and those who do not keep in their children and servants, and restrain them from openly polluting the day. Many professed Christians take no heed about encroaching upon the first and last hours of the sabbath. In some churches more than others,

these things abound. It becomes the churches to look into these things ; deeply to bewail their sinful backslidings, and to set themselves, in the use of the discipline, which Christ has appointed, to purge his temple from these spiritual defilements. The church of Christ is a city set on a hill, it cannot therefore be hid. If it be beautiful, its beauty will be seen ; if it be otherwise, it must be known. If we who profess to love God, do not love his day, and keep it in a holy and exemplary manner, we do more than others to bring it into contempt. May we see a reformation in this, as well as in other things, begin at the house of God ; and oh that it might not stop until it has pervaded the whole community !

VI. In attending to the Bible description of the sabbath, the mind is carried forward to the Millennium, to reflect with pleasure on the sabbath-day as it will then be sanctified. As there was a distinction between common, and holy time, in paradise ; so there will be in the time of Christ's spiritual reign on earth. The *glory* of this period will consist in the *peculiar holiness* of it. The holiness will be greater in degree, and more extensive in its spread, than in any former age of the world. "In that day," says the prophet, "shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD ; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem, and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts : " Zech. xiv. 20, 21. By this prediction we are taught, how the glory of God will then be ultimately regarded in *every thing*, even in putting bells on the horses, and in dressing and eating the common meals of the family. But even *then*, there will be a distinction between a common, and a sacramental meal ; between a common washing, and Christian baptism, and between *our days* and the *Lord's day*. And no doubt the people of the Millennium will be as much more exemplary than their predecessors, in their sanctification of the

Lord's day, as they will be in their improvement of common time. Their eminent piety, will peculiarly prepare them to call the sabbath a *delight*, and the holy of the Lord honorable. Their glowing zeal in the cause of religion, and sweet relish for the word and ordinances of God, will prepare them to welcome the holy day the first moment it arrives; and will prevent them from saying, When will the sabbath be gone, that we may return to the profits and pleasures of the world? Then "from one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before the Lord." All nations will be disciplined. The face of the earth, which will then be covered with many hundreds of millions of inhabitants, will all be divided into religious societies, or congregations; and each of these will build a sanctuary to the name of the Lord. These sanctuaries will every sabbath be crowded with solemn worshippers, and attentive hearers, who will be blessed with pious and faithful pastors. The Lord of the harvest will then send forth *laborers* into the harvest; and great shall be the company who will publish the glad tidings of the gospel. Then the table of the Lord will be surrounded with spiritual communicants, and none shall be found there who will render the table of the Lord contemptible; for then the Lord's people shall all be righteous.

In this blessed period, which is yet future, the sabbath will be sanctified in all their dwellings, as well as in the house of God. Every family-altar will smoke with the incense of prayer and praise. Every household will, on this day especially, be instructed into the things of the kingdom of God. The talk will not be vain or worldly; but such as becomes the day which the Lord hath set apart for himself.\* The HOLY BIBLE, with books of piety, will so engage their attention, that they will not need to read any

\* Intermission seasons will not then be a recess from *religious* duties, but only a change from public to private worship, and from public instruction to that *taking sweet counsel together*, which is one good improvement of the day.

others, to prevent the day from being tedious. How greatly will the sabbath, when it shall be thus sanctified, promote the honor of God, and the good of mankind! Our whole race will then appear like *one family*, acknowledging their Father in heaven. Our all uniting in the sanctification of the weekly sabbath, will be one of the most striking ways, in which the *unity* of the human family will be manifested. *Men and women* will be united in the sanctification of the Lord's day. *Rich and poor; learned and unlearned; kings and rulers, and their subjects; parents and their children; masters and their servants*, will all unite in devoting the sabbath to religion. The husbandman will leave his plough, the mechanic his shop, the merchant his store, the attorney his office, and the traveller, wherever the sabbath shall overtake him, will suspend his journey. They are each pursuing his own employment through the six days of labor; but when that "*sweet day of rest* returns, *which saw the Lord arise*," they all become one in their employment. The infinitely important subject of religion is now, not only their ultimate end, but is the *sole business* of the day. And these truly sanctified sabbaths, will prepare them all to fill up their different stations, during the other days of the week, with duty and usefulness.

The friends of piety will anticipate such a period with great pleasure. They, who have been grieved to see, how "the holy of the Lord" has been dishonored, will rejoice that this day is hereafter to be highly honored, and greatly and universally sanctified. They will also be reminded, that what the sabbath *will be* in the *Millennium*, such it *ought* to be *now*. And a reformation with respect to the sabbath, (which, depending on God, might easily be effected, if we were not heedless or stubborn,) would do much toward making the crooked things straight and the rough places smooth, that the way of the Lord might be prepared.

To conclude:—Let the inspired passages which have

been introduced, and the explanations and remarks to which they have given rise, be impartially considered, and let them have due influence on our minds, and on our practice. If there is one day in the week, on which we are forbidden to do our *own work*, find our *own pleasure*, or speak our *own words*, it is of high importance that we should be acquainted with the prohibition.

The subject, my hearers, to which your attention has been called in this series of discourses, is a practical and interesting one; and I have endeavored to treat it in a plain, familiar, and solemn manner. I would now leave it upon your consciences, and commend it, and you, to the blessing of HIM, who spake from the burning mount, saying, **REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.**

To HIM be paid the pure and growing worship of that Sabbath which shall never end, and of that Assembly which shall never break up! Amen.



## A P P E N D I X.

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The following facts and observations, relating to the subject of the Sabbath, partly original and partly extracts, will not be uninteresting in connexion with the preceding work.

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In the spring of 1819, two gentlemen, who had resided at the south for a few months, wishing to return to the north, came to Charleston, S. C. with a view of taking a passage to New-York. The vessels were in the habit of setting sail on the sabbath. After waiting in vain to find one which would sail on some other day of the week, they applied to Capt. M—— of the brig *Amelia*, which was advertised to sail on the ensuing sabbath, to endeavor to prevail on him to sail a day or two sooner, or to wait till the next Monday. The application was made in vain—for, as he said, all his passengers were engaged, and all his arrangements were made, so that nothing could induce him to alter his plan.

As one of the gentlemen was returning from church sabbath evening, he saw the brig lying at the wharf. He went on board, and saw only the steward of the vessel, a colored man; to whom he said, "Steward, I thought you was to have sailed to-day?" He replied, "Massa, we v'e been trying all day to get out of the harbor, but could n't—Captain, and all the passengers, and pilot, are aboard, and we shall go as soon as it's day-light in the morning." The gentleman requested the steward to ask the captain, (who had retired to his berth,) if he would take another passenger. He returned with an affirmative answer.

The gentleman was at the wharf with his baggage, early on Monday morning. The brig got under weigh at sunrise; and in little more than an hour was over the bar and outside of the harbor—and at ten o'clock A. M. was out of sight of land, on the

way to New-York. The voyage was a pleasant one, except that the gentleman alluded to was much annoyed on account of his religious principles, (and particularly that he would not sail out of port on the sabbath,) by a set of wicked passengers.

The brig arrived in New-York on Saturday evening, much to the gratification of the gentleman, but greatly to the mortification of the other passengers, who had, on the voyage, declared that if the vessel did not arrive at New-York before Sunday, they would throw him overboard. The captain became convinced that his new passenger was *right*; and actually charged him ten dollars less than he did the other passengers.

Some time afterwards, the gentleman met him in New-York, and was rejoiced to learn that he was connected with a line of packets which did not sail out of port on the Lord's Day.

In the month of October, 1820, the same gentleman was travelling from the state of Vermont to Rochester, N. Y. and other places. He had made an engagement to be at Clinton, near Utica, on Saturday evening, in order to start from there with company, to Vermont, on Monday morning. Having been delayed, he rode the whole of one night, in order to reach Auburn, to go on from there on Saturday morning. He waited there till noon before the stage came in from the west. It was loaded with specie and fourteen passengers. No extra was obtained short of seven miles. Arriving there the load was divided, and they rode on till supper time, expecting to proceed to Utica after supper. But a vote was taken by the passengers and carried, to go no further till the next day, although several of the company strongly dissented from it. The gentleman above alluded to got into the stage and rode to the first village, Vernon, and there landed with his baggage, with a view of spending the sabbath where he could attend public worship. Some of the passengers ridiculed him, that, after paying his passage, he should stop, a perfect stranger as he was, not knowing how he could go on.

On returning from the church to the tavern, he recognized an old friend who took him to his house. It being a bright moon light night, this friend insisted on carrying him to Clinton, which

he did, free of expense ; and by this means enabled the gentleman to meet his friends in the morning, who would have gone on their journey had he not arrived. It may be remarked, that those stages did not arrive at Utica till sabbath afternoon ; and a clergyman in the company, who had engaged to preach at Utica that day, consequently did not arrive in season to fulfil his engagement.

A conscientious christian man,—well known to the public, but now no more on earth,—was, from the nature of his business, abroad over the country a great portion of his time. He was truly a devoted disciple of Jesus. Ascending the Mississippi in one of the great steamers, he inquired of the captain on Saturday, if he was in the habit of stopping to keep the sabbath. To the ears of such a man, the question of course sounded very strange ; and upon his answering in the negative, “ Well then,” said the passenger, “ you will please to set me on shore at the next landing-place.” The captain remonstrated, assuring the good man that he might be left there a week without the opportunity of getting on. Nothing moved, however, when once his mind was made up, on a point of duty, he went on shore ; and at a poor neighborhood endeavored to do good and to keep the sabbath. It proved to him a happy day. He trusted in God, that some interposition in his behalf would take place ; and his confidence,—as it proved,—was not misplaced. After a refreshing sleep he arose early on Monday morning ; and one of the first sounds which greeted his ear, was the bell of an ascending steamer, announcing her approach to the landing.

In the year 1822, the British House of Commons appointed a committee to investigate the effects of laboring seven days in a week compared with those of laboring six, and resting one. They examined a large number of witnesses. Among them was Dr. Farre, of London, a celebrated physician of much experience. He says :

“ I have practised as a physician between thirty and forty years ; and during the early part of my life, as the physician of a public medical institution, I had the charge of the poor in one of the most populous districts of London. I have had occasion to observe the

observance and non-observance of the seventh day of rest during this time. I have been in the habit, during a great many years, of considering the *uses* of the sabbath, and of observing its *abuses*. The abuses are chiefly manifested in labor and dissipation. Its use, medically speaking, is that of a day of rest. As a day of rest, I view it as a day of compensation for the inadequate restorative power of the body under *continued* labor and excitement. A physician always has respect to the preservation of the restorative power; because, if once this be lost, his healing office is at an end. A physician is anxious to preserve the balance of circulation, as necessary to the restorative power of the body. The ordinary exertions of man *run down* the circulation every day of his life; and the first general law of nature, by which God prevents man from destroying himself, is the alternating of day and night, that repose may succeed action. But, although the night apparently equalizes the circulation, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a *long* life. Hence, one day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect, by its repose, the animal system. You may easily determine this question, as a matter of fact, by trying it on beasts of burden. Take that fine animal, the horse, and work him to the full extent of his powers every day in the week, or give him rest one day in seven, and you will soon perceive, by the superior vigor with which he performs his functions on the other six days, that this rest is necessary to his well-being. Man, possessing a superior nature, is borne along by the very vigor of his mind, so that the injury of *continued* diurnal exertion and excitement on his animal system, is not so immediately apparent as it is in the brute; but, in the long run, he breaks down more suddenly; it abridges the length of his life, and that vigor of his old age (as to mere animal power) ought to be the object of his preservation. I consider, therefore, that, in the bountiful provision of Providence for the preservation of human life, the sabbatical appointment is not as it has been sometimes theologically viewed, simply a precept partaking of the nature of a political institution, but that it is to be numbered amongst the *natural* duties, if the preservation of life be a duty, and the premature destruction of it a suicidal act. This

is said simply as a physician, and without reference at all to the theological question; but if you consider further the proper effects of real Christianity, namely, peace of mind, confiding trust in God, and good-will to man, you will perceive in this source of renewed vigor to the mind, and through the mind to the body, an additional spring of life imparted from this higher use of the sabbath as a holy rest. Were I to pursue this part of the question, I should be touching on the duties committed to the clergy: but this will I say,—that researches in *physiology*, by the analogy of the working of Providence in nature, will show that the divine commandment is not to be considered as an arbitrary enactment, but as an appointment necessary to man. This is the position in which I would place it, as contradistinguished from precept and legislation; I would point out the sabbatical rest as necessary to man, and that the great enemies of the sabbath, and consequently the enemies of man, are, all laborious exercises of the body or mind, and dissipation, which force the circulation on that day in which it should repose; while relaxation from the ordinary cares of life, the enjoyment of this repose in the bosom of one's family, with the religious studies and duties which the day enjoins,—not one of which, if rightly exercised, tends to abridge life,—constitute the beneficial and appropriate service of the day.

“I have found it essential to my own well-being, as a physician, to abridge my labor on the sabbath to what is actually necessary. I have frequently observed the premature death of medical men from *continued* exertion. In warm climates and in active service this is painfully apparent. I have advised the clergyman also, in lieu of his sabbath, to rest one day in the week; it forms a continual prescription of mine. I have seen many destroyed by their duties on that day; and to preserve others, I have frequently suspended them, for a season, from the discharge of those duties. I would say, further, that, quitting the grosser evils of mere animal living from over-stimulation and undue exercise of body, the working of the mind in one continued train of thought is destructive of life in the most distinguished class of society, and that senators themselves stand in need of reform in that particular. I have observed many of them destroyed by neglecting this economy of

life. Therefore, to all men, of whatever class, who must necessarily be occupied six days in the week, I would recommend to abstain on the seventh; and, in the course of life, by giving to their bodies the repose, and to their minds the change of ideas, suited to the day, they would assuredly gain by it. In fact, by the increased vigor imparted, more mental work would be accomplished in their lives. A human being is so constituted that he needs a day of rest both from mental and bodily labor."

Mr. Wilberforce says, "O what a blessed day is the sabbath, which allows us a precious interval wherein to pause, to come out from the thickets of worldly concerns, and give ourselves up to heavenly and spiritual objects. *Observation and my own experience have convinced me that there is a special blessing on the right employment of these intervals.* One of their prime objects, in my judgment, is to strengthen our impressions of invisible things, and to induce a habit of living much under their influence." "I can truly declare that to me *the sabbath has been invaluable.*" When Wilberforce heard of the death of Lord Castlereagh, who came to an untimely end, he exclaimed, "Poor fellow! He was certainly deranged—the effect, probably, of continued wear of mind. The strong impression on my mind is, that it is the effect of the *non-observance* of the sabbath; both as to abstracting from politics, and from the constant recurring of the same reflections, and as correcting the false views of worldly things and bringing them down to their true diminutiveness."

Another British writer remarks, "We never knew a man work seven days in a week, who did not kill himself or kill his mind."

A distinguished financier, charged with an immense amount of property during the great pecuniary pressure of 1836 and 1837, said, "I should have been a dead man, had it not been for the sabbath. Obligated to work from morning till night, through the whole week, I felt on Saturday, as if I *must* have rest. It was like going into a dense fog. Every thing looked dark and gloomy, as if nothing could be saved. I dismissed all, and kept the sabbath in the good old way. On Monday it was all bright sunshine. I could see through, and I got through. But had

it not been for the sabbath, I have no doubt I should have been in the grave."

Dr. Sewall, of Washington City, remarks, "For a number of years, I have been in close intimacy and intercourse with men in public life, officers of the government, and representatives in the national legislature, and eminent jurists, whose labors are generally great, and whose duties are arduous and pressing. Some of them have considered it their privilege, as well as their duty, to suspend their public functions, while others have continued them to the going down of the sabbath sun. Upon the commencement of the secular week, the one class arise with all their powers invigorated and refreshed, while the other come to their duties with body and mind jaded and out of tone. I have no hesitation in declaring it as my opinion that, if the sabbath were universally observed, as a day of devotion and of rest from secular occupations, *far more work of body and mind would be accomplished, and be better done; more health would be enjoyed, with more of wealth and independence, and we should have far less of crime, and poverty, and suffering.*"

Dr. J. P. Harrison says, "The sabbath was made for man. This truth is forcibly exemplified in the benefits conferred on the bodies of men by a proper observance of God's holy day of rest. Incessant, uninterrupted toil wears out the energies of man's limited strength. The elasticity of the spring is destroyed by unabated pressure. The nervous system is especially relieved by alternations of activity and repose, and by diversification of impressions. The sacred quietness of the sabbath takes off from the brain that excessive fulness of blood which the mental and bodily exercise of six days is calculated to produce. The change of dress, the social worship, the physical rest, and the transfer of thought and feeling from earthly interests to higher objects, not only harmonize the moral, but they refresh and invigorate the *bodily* powers. All experience is expressive of this universal proposition, that *a longer life and a greater degree of health, are the sure results of a careful regard to the commandment, 'Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.'*"

Dr. J. C. Warren, of Boston, says, "So far as my observation has extended, those persons who are in the habit of avoiding worldly cares on the sabbath, are those most remarkable for the perfect performance of their duties during the week. The influence of a change of thought, on the sabbath, upon the minds of such persons, resembles that of the change of food upon the body. It seems to give a fresh spring to the mental operations, as the latter does to the physical. *I have a firm belief that such persons are able to do more work, and do it in a better manner, in six days, than if they worked the whole seven.* The breathing of the pure and sublime atmosphere of a religious sabbath refreshes and invigorates the spirit. It forms an epoch in our existence from which we receive a new impulse, and thus constitutes the best preparation for the labors of the following week."

At a regular meeting of the New Haven Medical Association, composed of twenty-five physicians, among whom were the professors of the Medical College, the following questions were considered:

1. Is the position taken by Dr. Farre, in his testimony before the committee of the British House of Commons, in your view, correct? 2. Will men who labor but six days in a week be more healthy and live longer, other things being equal, than those who labor seven? 3. Will they do more work, and do it in a better manner?—The vote on the above was *unanimously in the affirmative*; signed by Eli Ives, chairman, and Pliny A. Jewett, clerk.

The opinions of the above, and numerous other distinguished medical gentlemen, are abundantly confirmed by facts. "Several physicians who have lived in the neighborhood of the Erie canal, have witnessed the deteriorating effects of seven days' working upon the physical constitution, both of man and beast—making it fully evident, that men are more sickly than others, bring upon themselves, in greater numbers, a premature old age, and sink to an untimely grave. Not only is it true that men who labor but six days in a week, and rest one, are more healthy, merely, and live longer than those who labor seven; but *they do more work, and in a better manner.* The experiment was tried in England, upon two thousand men. They were employed for years seven days in a



week. To render them contented in giving up their right to the sabbath as a day of rest, (*that birth-right of the human family*), they paid them double wages on that day, i. e. eight days' wages for seven days' labor. But they could not keep them healthy, nor make them moral. Things went badly, and they changed their course—employed the workmen only six days in a week, and allowed them to rest on the sabbath. The consequence was, that they did more work than ever before. This, the superintendent said, was owing to two causes, viz., the *demoralization of the people* under the first system, and *their exhaustion of bodily strength*, which was visible to the most casual observer.

In the year 1839, a committee was appointed in the legislature of Pennsylvania, who made a report with regard to the employment of laborers on their canals. In that report, they say, in reference to those who had petitioned against the employment of the workmen on the sabbath: "They assert, as *the result of their experience*, that both man and beast can do more work by resting one day in seven, than by working on the whole seven." They also add, "Your committee feel free to confess that *their own experience*, as business men, farmers, or legislators, corresponds with the assertion."

The minister of marine in France has addressed a letter to all the maritime prefects, directing that no workman, except in case of absolute necessity, be employed in the government dock-yards on the sabbath. One reason which he gives is, that men who do not rest on the sabbath do not perform as much labor during the week, and, of course, that it is not profitable to the state to have labor performed on that day. Another reason is, that it is useful to the state to promote among the laboring classes, *the religious observance of the sabbath*.

The experiment was tried in a large flouring establishment. For a number of years, they worked the mills seven days in a week. The superintendent was then changed. He ordered all the works to be stopped at eleven o'clock on Saturday night, and to start none of them till one o'clock on Monday morning; thus

allowing a full sabbath every week. The consequence was, that the same workmen, during the year, actually ground thousands of bushels more than had ever been ground, in a single year, in that establishment before. The men having been permitted to cleanse themselves, put on their best apparel, rest from worldly business, go with their families to the house of God, and devote the sabbath to its appropriate duties, were more healthy, moral, punctual and diligent. They lost less time in drinking, dissipation and quarrels. They were more clear-headed and whole-hearted; knew better how to do things, and were more disposed to do them in the right way.

It has been said that those who manufacture salt by boiling, must violate the sabbath, because it will not do to let the kettles cool down as often as once a week. But a gentleman tried the experiment, who said that, if he could not keep the sabbath, he would not make salt. He had thirty-two kettles. He allowed the fires to go out, and all the works to stop, from Saturday till Monday. His men attended public worship on the sabbath. In the course of the season, they boiled seventy-eight days, and made, upon an average, over two hundred bushels of salt a day—in all fifteen thousand eight hundred and seventy bushels; and at an expense, for breakage and repairs, of only six cents. At the close of the season, he told his sabbath-breaking neighbors how much he had made; but it was so much more than they had made themselves, that they could hardly believe him. Their expenses for breakage and repairs had been much greater than his. Not a man, with the same dimensions of kettles, had made as much salt as he.

It was formerly supposed that lime could not be manufactured, without burning the kilns nine or ten days. A man in the state of Vermont became convinced that he ought no longer to be employed in making the article, as it kept him from the house of God on the sabbath. He however tried the experiment of making *smaller kilns*, so that he could set his fires on Monday morning, and finish them on Saturday. The kilns would *cool* on the sabbath as well as on any other day, and in less time than *larger* ones. He soon ascertained that it was best in his case, and no

longer practised burning lime on that day. His lime, too, was of the first quality, and always commanded a ready market and a good price. The writer of this article was well acquainted with the man, and the facts in the case—and it is supposed that *coal pits* might be burned within a week, if not made too large.

A gentleman who resides in a fishing town, and who has made extensive inquiries, remarks: "Those who fish on the sabbath do not, ordinarily, take any more, during the season, than those who keep the sabbath. They do not make more money, or prosper better for this world. They are not more respectable or useful, nor are their families." "One man followed fishing eight years. The first four he fished on the sabbath. The next four he strictly kept the sabbath, and is satisfied that it was for his advantage in a temporal point of view." "Another man testifies that, in the year 1827, he and his men took more fish by far than any who were associated with them, though he kept the sabbath, and they did not. It was invariably his practice to rest from Saturday till Monday. Though it was an unfavorable season for the fisheries, he was greatly prospered in every way, and to such an extent that many regarded his success as almost miraculous."

A gentleman belonging to another fishing town, which sends out more than two hundred vessels in a year, writes as follows: "I think it may safely be stated that those vessels which have not fished on the sabbath have, taken together, met with *more than ordinary success*. The vessel whose earnings were the highest, the last year, and the year before, was one on board which the sabbath was kept by refraining from labor, and by religious worship. There is one firm which has had eight vessels in its employ this season. Seven have fished on the sabbath, and one has not. That one has earned seven hundred dollars more than the most successful of the six."

Laboring animals, when employed but six days in a week, and allowed to rest one, are more healthy than they can be when employed during the whole seven. They do more work and live longer.

The experiment was tried on a hundred and twenty horses. They were employed, for years, seven days in a week. But they became unhealthy, and finally died so fast, that the owner put them on a six days' arrangement. After this he was not obliged to replenish them one-fourth part as often as before. Numerous testimonials might be brought forward tending to establish these facts, were there room to admit them under this head.

Sir Matthew Hale says: "Though my hands and my mind have been as full of secular business both before and after I was judge, as, it may be, any man's in England, yet I never wanted time in six days to ripen and fit myself for the business and employments I had to do, though I borrowed not one minute from the Lord's day, to prepare for it by study or otherwise. But on the other hand, if I had, at any time, borrowed from this day, any time for my secular employment, I found it did further me less than if I had let it alone."

The late Dr. Wilson, of Philadelphia, before he became a preacher of the gospel, was an eminent lawyer in the state of Delaware. He was accustomed, when pressed with business, to make out his briefs, and prepare for his Monday's pleading, on the sabbath. But he so uniformly failed, during the week, in carrying out his Sunday plans, that it arrested his attention. As a philosopher, he inquired into the cause of his uniform failure, and came to the conclusion that it might be, and probably was, on account of his violation of the sabbath, by employing it in secular business. He therefore, from that time, abandoned the practice of doing any thing for his clients on that day. The difficulty ceased. His efforts on Monday were as successful as on other days. Many others have testified to similar facts in their experience.

Mr. Wickliffe, the late P. M. General, writes: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," is a divine commandment. I pray you, my children, learn early its importance. It was a remark of my venerable mother, often made to me, that "no good ever came of Sunday-work," and I have usually found it to be so. Even if persons do not belong to any church, a regular attendance

upon divine service chastens the feelings, and better fits and prepares them for companions.

A man who ridiculed the idea that God makes a difference in his providence between those who yield visible obedience to his laws and those who do not, had been engaged, on a certain sabbath, in gathering crops into his barn. The next week he had occasion to take fire out into his field in order to burn some brush. He left it, as he supposed, safely, and went in to dinner. The wind took the fire, and carried it into his barn-yard, which was filled with combustibles, and, before he was aware of it, the flames were bursting out of his barn. He arose in amazement, saw that all was lost, and, fixing his eye on the curling flames, stood speechless. Then, raising his finger, and pointing to the rising column of fire, he said, with solemn emphasis, "That is the finger of God."

Chancellor Walworth, in his letter to the National Sabbath Convention, says: "Allow me to refer to the case of the total abrogation of the sabbath by revolutionary France. That abrogation was accompanied by a general corruption of morals, and even by the breaking up of the conjugal relation, under the law allowing an unlimited divorce at the mere will of the parties, when, as the Abbe Gregoire states, upwards of twenty thousand divorces were registered in the short space of eighteen months; and those in the city of Paris were nearly equal to the number of marriages. There again the headless trunks of unnumbered thousands of contending factions attested the righteous indignation of the God of the sabbath, at this national desecration and abrogation of his holy day, and the extinction of all religion."

Dr. Stuart, the late Bishop of Quebec, was a person who believed in, and noticed the providence of God in the affairs of men. In a sermon, preached after the close of the late war, he recognized the hand of God in the defeat of their army and fleet at Plattsburgh,—because they came out to engage in battle with the Americans on the sabbath.

When the Hartford and New-Haven Rail-Road first went into operation, the superintendent and directors were determined to

carry freight on the sabbath, notwithstanding many of the stockholders remonstrated against it. It is a fact, that soon after they commenced, about a thousand dollars worth of cotton was destroyed by fire from the locomotive, while running the cars on the sabbath.

Dr. Dwight observes: "To this institution we owe far the greater part of the spiritual blessings which we enjoy; and in a high sense we owe them all. But for this day, we should neither have sought, nor secured, eternal life: for where no sabbath is, there is no religion. But for this day, earthly things would have engrossed all our thoughts. Honor, wealth, and pleasure, are the real sirens which charm mankind to shipwreck and death. To their songs the ear of man is by nature attuned, and the heart beats in regular response. But for this day, the world, as a canker, would rust, corrupt, and consume all the disposition to piety, and all the hopes of heaven. The soul would be benumbed. Religion would die. God would be forgotten. The death of Christ would be vain. Mankind would cease to be saved; and heaven would fail of her destined inhabitants. How desolate the prospect! How strongly would this world resemble the regions of final despair; where no sabbath dawns; where no prayers nor praises ascend; no sermons proclaim pardon and peace to sinners; the voice of mercy never sounds; and the smiles of forgiving, redeeming and sanctifying love never illumine the dreary valley of the shadow of death."——

"The sabbath is a rest from sin, business, and pleasure; a day in which God is worshipped, divine knowledge improved, and holiness attained and increased; a day in which saints delightfully commune, and joyfully celebrate the wonders of creation, and the sublimer wonders of redemption. On the sabbath God is peculiarly present, reconciled, forgiving, and sanctifying; and the Spirit of truth eminently communicates comfortable evidence of divine love, whispers peace, and inspires joy. The sabbath is, therefore, the day of hope and consolation, of enjoyment and triumph; the foretaste of heaven; the entrance to the glorious assembly of the blessed."

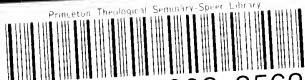








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